JANUARY 1960

COMMENTARY

H-Bombs for Everybody? — DENIS HEALEY

The Concealments of Marcel — MAURICE SAMUEL

Settling in England — DAN JACOBSON

Uneasy Balance of de Gaulle's Republic — RAY ALAN

The Magnification of Chanukah — JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

The Klan Tries a Comeback — WILMA DYKEMAN & JAMES STOKELY

Two Poems — IRVING FELDMAN

Simon bar Giora, Ancient Jewish Hero — CECIL ROTH

Orlick Miller and Company—From a Novel — JACK LUDWIG

Cedars of Lebanon
Babel, the Flood, and Space Travel

On the Horizon
Freud and the Zohar — DAVID BAKAN

The Study of Man
Democracy and Revolution — OSCAR GASS

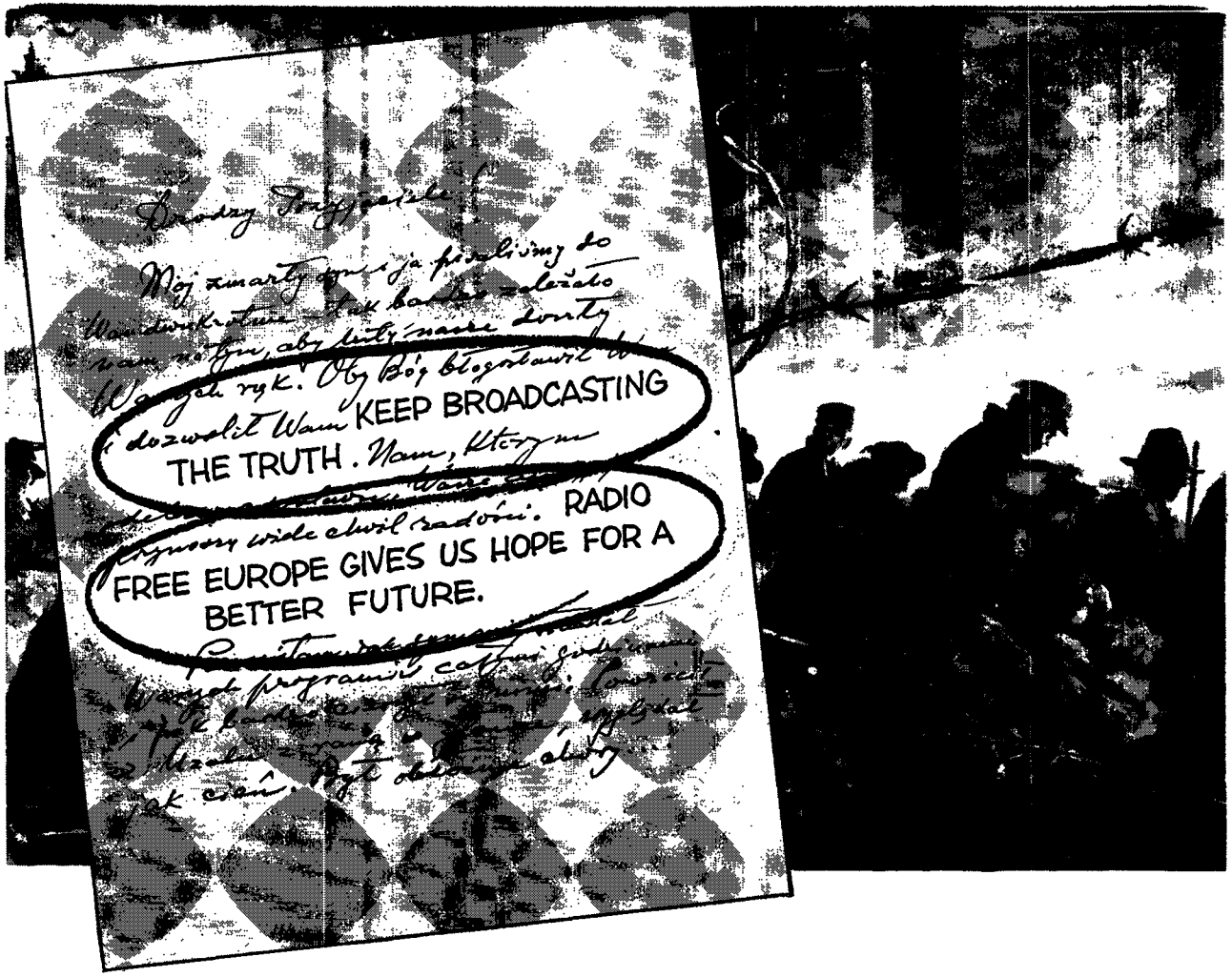
BOOKS IN REVIEW

Maurice Cohen — Milton Hindus — David Ray — Reuel Denney
Rose Guildenstern — Ben B. Seligman — Christopher Hill

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

60c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Answer this call for help from behind the Iron Curtain!

This is one of many letters smuggled out from behind the Iron Curtain that prove the importance o RADIO FREE EUROPE in the battle for men's minc The battle of Communist lies against the truth.

This is your battle, too! Your own freedom is endangered, for if Communist lies stay unanswered, if the truth does not get through, the Reds will have won a decisive victory in their Cold War.

You can help by keeping the strong, crystal-clear voice of RADIO FREE EUROPE broadcasting the truth to combat Communist lies!

You must help! RADIO FREE EUROPE is a priva organization that depends on your dollars to pay for equipment, announcers, and news analysts necessary to combat Communist lies!

GIVE THE GIFT OF FREE MEN AND WOMEN . . . GIVE THE TRUTH!

Send Your Truth Dollars for

RADIO FREE EUROPE

to: CRUSADE FOR FREEDOM

care of your local Postmaster

ADVERTISING COUNCIL · PUBLIC SERVICE ·

RFE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, *the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture.*

The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY'S *contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of* COMMENTARY *by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.*

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

HERBERT B. EHRMANN, *President*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Share

your reading pleasure
with friends and relatives

Give a year of COMMENTARY

Simply fill in and mail the enclosed gift card

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

JANUARY 1960 VOLUME 29, NUMBER 1

H-Bombs for Everybody?	*Denis Healey*	1
The Concealments of Marcel	*Maurice Samuel*	8
Settling in England	*Dan Jacobson*	23
Uneasy Balance of de Gaulle's Republic	*Ray Alan*	29
The Magnification of Chanukah	*Jakob J. Petuchowski*	38
Two Poems	*Irving Feldman*	44
The Klan Tries a Comeback	*Wilma Dykeman & James Stokely*	45
Simon bar Giora, Ancient Jewish Hero	*Cecil Roth*	52
Orlick Miller and Company *Excerpt from a Novel*	*Jack Ludwig*	59
Cedars of Lebanon Babel, the Flood, and Space Travel		63
On the Horizon Freud and the Zohar	*David Bakan*	65
The Study of Man Democracy and Revolution	*Oscar Gass*	67
Letters from Readers		74
Books in Review		
Hellenism, by Arnold J. Toynbee	*Maurice Cohen*	77
Letters of Theodore Dreiser, edited by Robert H. Elias	*Milton Hindus*	80
A Kindly Contagion, by Walter Toman	*David Ray*	83
New Face in the Mirror, by Yael Dayan	*Rose Guildenstern*	85
Sociology Today, edited by Robert K. Merton, Leonard Bloom, and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr.	*Reuel Denney*	86
The A. F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger, by Philip Taft	*Ben B. Seligman*	88
The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman, by Caroline Robbins	*Christopher Hill*	90

Editor
ELLIOT E. COHEN
(1945–1959)

Associate Editors
MARTIN GREENBERG
ANATOLE SHUB

Assistant Editor
SHERRY ABEL

Business Manager
FRANCES GREEN

Advertising
DOROTHY PUTNEY

Editorial Secretary BRENDA BROWN

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE
DAVID SHER, *Chairman*
CHARLES D. BREITEL, ALBERT FURTH, MAURICE GLINERT,
SYDNEY M. KAYE, EDWARD KUHN, JR., LEWIS J. LAVENTHOL,
JONATHAN MARSHALL, PEARSON E. NEAMAN,
HARRY STEINER, ALAN M. STROOCK, JACK D. TARCHER, BEN TOUSTER

COMMENTARY, incorporating *Contemporary Jewish Record:* Published monthly by the American Jewish Committee, 60¢ a copy; $7.00 a year; 2 years, $12.00; 3 years, $17.00. No additional charge for Canadian or foreign postage. Editorial and Business offices: 165 East 56th Street, New York 22. Second class postage paid at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Copyright 1960 by the American Jewish Committee. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved by the publisher in the United States, Great Britain, Mexico, and all countries participating in the International Copyright Convention and the Pan-American Copyright Convention. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Magazine Subject Index, and Public Affairs Information Service. *Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The American Jewish Committee

announces the appointment of NORMAN PODHORETZ *as Editor of* COMMENTARY, *beginning with the issue of February 1960. Mr. Podhoretz was formerly an associate editor of the magazine.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

H-BOMBS FOR EVERYBODY?

The Dangers of Nuclear Plenty

DENIS HEALEY

LONDON

FOR the last fifteen years, the possession of atomic weapons has been the one incontestable criterion of great power status—and the difficulty of producing atomic weapons has kept the number of great powers very small. But a new phase is fast approaching. In the course of the 1960's, more than a score of countries will be physically capable of producing atomic weapons for themselves if they think it politically worth while; and some of these countries, like Switzerland and Sweden, have previously been considered as only small powers in the game of international diplomacy.

There is no longer any purely scientific secret about the manufacture of atomic weapons. The engineering problems, though formidable, are within the capacity of any country which can produce, say, an automobile and a wristwatch. At present, the biggest obstacle is the cost of producing atomic explosive by the cumbrous systems of chemical separation. But fissile material suitable for weapons is a natural by-product of atomic power reactors. In the coming decade, perhaps half the countries in the world will start amassing the raw material for atomic weapons in the normal course of increasing their resources of industrial power by building atomic reactors.

So far, no country has resisted the temptation to make its own atomic weapons once it acquired the physical means to do so—though some had made the most fervent protestations of non-nuclear chastity so long as they were impotent. In the immediate future, the most likely new candidates for membership in the nuclear club are certain countries in Western Europe which are at present members of NATO. The precedent set by Britain and followed by France could lead West Germany, Italy, and Belgium to achieve a similar nuclear independence within as little as five years. Indeed, if present trends continue, atomic weapons may soon be as easily available as conventional weapons throughout the Western alliance. If so, the chance of stopping the spread of nuclear arms outside the NATO area may disappear for good.

Britain and France have sought to justify their bid for nuclear independence by arguing that this will provide much needed reinforcement to the American thermonuclear

---

DENIS HEALEY, a member of the British Labor party's "shadow cabinet," is an authoritative analyst of foreign affairs, and a councilor of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. He has contributed to such books as *New Fabian Essays* and *Fabian International Essays*, as well as to the *Economist*, *New Statesman*, and other periodicals. His article "The Military Stalemate" appeared in our March 1958 number.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deterrent against Soviet aggression in Europe: for there is a waning belief that the U. S. would answer a Soviet aggression in Europe with atomic bombs, at the risk of Soviet atomic retaliation against the American mainland. Yet both Britain and France have hinted that the atomic bomb is also intended to give them independence of action outside Europe. Ever since Suez, France and Britain have felt that an independent atomic capacity would greatly reduce the risk of intervention by the Soviet Union if they decided to pursue their interests outside Europe without American support. Indeed, circumstances could arise in which a European country with its own atomic weapons might use them, or threaten to use them, against a non-atomic power outside Europe—after all, America did so against Japan. What happened at Sakiet in Tunisia four years ago with conventional weapons, could conceivably happen one day to Tunis or Cairo with atomic bombs.

This possibility will enormously increase the incentive for powers outside Europe to acquire atomic weapons for themselves as soon as they have the capacity to do so. Once several European powers possess their own atomic weapons, the Afro-Asian countries will feel it desperately necessary to follow suit. Each new member of the atomic club in any part of the world will inspire fears and jealousies among its particular enemies and friends, thus speeding up the chain reaction.

Perhaps the most important single factor in this chain reaction is the impact of a French, German, or Italian bomb on Russia's will and ability to resist China's demand for nuclear weapons. There are grounds for believing that Russia, even though clearly reluctant to see her allies possessing nuclear weapons of their own, has been obliged to copy whatever precedents America has set, even to the distribution of battlefield atomic weapons and medium-range missiles under the American system of double veto. If any further powers obtain their own atomic weapons on the Western side of the Iron Curtain, what will prevent China from achieving her stated aim of acquiring her own atomic weapons by 1961? And, once China is known to have independent atomic striking power, Japan, India, and perhaps Indonesia too will have to follow suit, either by manufacturing their own nuclear weapons or obtaining them from others.

BOTH the cost and the value of atomic weapons depend primarily on the military strength of the country against which they are directed. Western thinking on this problem, it seems to me, has been distorted by the assumption that the potential enemy must be the Soviet Union, a power with formidable defenses and a large nuclear striking force of its own. The nuclear striking force needed to oppose such an enemy must dispose of many megaton bombs, carried in missiles from bases which are widely dispersed and highly protected or very mobile. This sort of force may prove to be beyond the capacity of a country even as rich as Britain. Moreover, since even such a force could not hope to destroy Russia's retaliatory power, the only rational reason for its existence would be to deter the Soviet Union from making a surprise attack directed exclusively against the country concerned. For most European countries, this is the least probable of all contingencies.

However, a country that wants atomic weapons to bully an enemy with poor defenses and no atomic weapons of its own does not need such a large striking force. It may be satisfied with a few kiloton bombs and a primitive delivery system; two nominal atomic bombs exploded in the holds of large vessels in the harbors of Haifa and Tel Aviv could destroy Israel as a state. Thus, in some circumstances, a small country may expect to gain much more than a large one by pushing its way into the nuclear club.

Many countries in the world have local enemies against whom they would be fully prepared to use force if they felt confident of obtaining victory at a reasonable cost. Once atomic weapons begin to spread into the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will be greater danger that nuclear striking power may be used not just as a deterrent, but for aggression. A country which acquired several hydrogen bombs, before its enemy had any, would have a tremendous incentive to use its advantage while it could, before it found itself condemned to the ruinous and unending competition in which America and Russia have been engaged in the last few years. There were compelling moral and practical reasons why America did not use her atomic forces against Russia before Russia started to produce atomic weapons. Such reasons might prove less compelling if the countries concerned were, for example, China and South Korea, or Egypt and Iraq. In such a case, the advocates of a preventive war might well have their way.

Precisely for this reason, once their industrial reactors begin to produce plutonium of weapons grade, every country in a given political complex will feel it vitally important to start making nuclear weapons for itself, lest its enemy beat it to the draw. Moreover, the costs and risks of external intervention to halt or control this process of the diffusion of nuclear weapons will increase geometrically with the development of local atomic forces.

Some people argue that the last ten years' experience has shown that peace will be more secure the more countries there are that have their own atomic weapons; the risks of nuclear war, they say, will then be better understood. This seems to me a frighteningly superficial view. Peace cannot be secured by universal terror. It is theoretically conceivable that a stable balance of world power might be constructed if every country in the world had the capacity to destroy any other country in the world which attacked it by surprise. But, in practice, even the balance between America and Russia seems unlikely to achieve such stability. The limited experience of the last ten years shows that the development of atomic weapons can proceed at different rates in different countries. Once the process becomes general, there will always be times when a given country has an overwhelming temptation to use its atomic superiority while it still exists. Current discussion in the United States and Russia of the importance of surprise attack and the pre-emptive blow indicates that a world of thermonuclear powers would be infinitely more unstable than any mankind has yet known—even though the cost of that instability might be the end of mankind itself.

It is this fact, rather than any calculation of strategic advantage in the context of the cold war, which offers the best hope that governments with the capacity to produce their own atomic weapons may yet be persuaded not to do so. At present, each potential entrant to the nuclear club acts as if it had the choice between being one of a small circle of thermonuclear great powers or remaining forever with the small powers in the second rank. But that is no longer the real choice. The choice today is between halting the spread of nuclear weapons for good in the next few years, or toppling willy-nilly into the sort of thermonuclear anarchy in which no country will ever be able to feel secure again. Of course, each new member of the atomic club hopes that he will be the last. But in fact each addition to the select few greatly increases the incentive for others to join. Unless a start is made in the next few years, the practical possibility of halting the spread of nuclear weapons among the nations will soon become a hundred times more difficult, or even disappear for good.

In the present state of scientific knowledge, on the other hand, when weapons-grade material can be produced only in atomic reactors or in large and very costly separation plants, it would be technically possible to prevent atomic weapons' production in new countries by confiscating or "poisoning" the plutonium-239 produced in industrial reactors and by prohibiting the construction of separation plants. Such a control system would be comparatively cheap and simple to operate—indeed, Britain and the U.S. have both insisted on similar controls as a condition of sale

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when exporting atomic reactors. But if once a country acquires a few hundred kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium, it has a good chance of making atomic bombs in secret without being found out—even if at a later date an international control system is established in its atomic plants. And once it has made a stockpile of weapons, there is at present no way known of discovering where they are hidden.

This problem has already arisen in the argument between Russia, America, Britain, and France about a ban on nuclear tests. Britain and France argued that a test ban would simply leave them in a position of permanent inferiority, unless America and Russia agreed to cease production of atomic weapons and to convert their existing stockpiles to peaceful uses. Russia and America argued, entirely cogently, that a cutoff on production was a hundred times more difficult to control than a ban on tests, and that there was no scientific means of discovering stockpiles of weapons in any case. Britain was finally won over to the idea of a test ban when America promised to give her the information she would otherwise need to obtain by testing. Lacking this information, France remains obdurate.

In the larger context, the problem is not simply one of satisfying the demand of non-nuclear powers for equal status—although the atomic missile has, unfortunately, become a diplomatic virility symbol. To some extent, the desire of the European countries for their own nuclear weapons is a natural response to the new strategic situation created by the balance of terror between Russia and the United States. The waning belief that American atomic power can deter Russia from aggression in Europe, now that the Soviet Union has the power to respond in kind, has created a feeling of insecurity among America's allies which must be removed if they are to be persuaded to forgo production of their own atomic weapons.

To put it bluntly: America's strategic stake in Western Europe is smaller than it was when NATO was created because she no longer needs European bases for her own nuclear striking force. Meanwhile, the risk she runs in implementing a strategy of "massive thermonuclear retaliation" in response to even a conventional attack upon her allies is infinitely greater. The fears created by these strategic changes have been heightened recently by what some Europeans consider a new American attitude of complaisance toward Soviet policy on Germany and by the possibility that America's dollar deficit may lead her to cut her military commitments abroad. Unless these fears can be quickly assuaged, there is no prospect of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons inside Western Europe—even though, ironically enough, the spread of nuclear weapons is likely to accelerate still further America's disengagement from the Continent.

WHAT alternatives are there which offer Europe the prospect of greater security? There are, in my opinion, three main lines of escape from the dilemma: to create a greater capacity for local defense along the Iron Curtain; to give Western Europe a greater share in control of the American deterrent; and to reach agreement with Russia on the control of armaments in both halves of Europe. These alternatives, as we shall see, are not mutually exclusive but complementary.

In the United States, opinion seems to favor creating a much greater capacity for local resistance to Soviet aggression—that is, stronger ground and tactical air forces stationed along the Iron Curtain. Thus, even if the need for strategic thermonuclear retaliation by the United States would not be wholly eliminated, the threshold of provocation at which it might be invoked would be considerably raised. The National Advisory Council of the Democratic party, for example, recommends a substantial strengthening of European, British, Canadian, and American ground and tactical air forces assigned to NATO or in strategic reserve; it further suggests that these forces should aim at defending Europe with conventional weapons only, keeping tactical atomic weapons in the background solely as a deterrent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against the use of similar weapons by the Soviet Union.

This proposal obviously seems the best option so far as the United States is concerned. But many Europeans see it as an attempt to release America altogether from the retaliatory role which originally made NATO attractive to them. They fear that if Russia did attack, they might find themselves not only suffering the whole weight of the war on their own territory but also losing the war in the end. For though NATO might hope to match the Soviet conventional forces at present in Eastern Europe, NATO could not be expected to match all the forces which stand ready in the Soviet Union itself and which might be thrown into the fighting at a later stage—or which might indeed be brought into Eastern Europe before the fighting began at all. The only action then possible to NATO would be massive thermonuclear retaliation—hydrogen bombs dropped on Russian cities. But there could be no guarantee of this so long as the physical power of retaliation is exclusively in American hands. Indeed, once large-scale conventional warfare was already under way, it would be comparatively easy for Russia to use the threat of a pre-emptive strike to blackmail the United States into keeping her thermonuclear forces out of the war for good. If, on the other hand, Europe can rely on American thermonuclear retaliation at this stage of the contest, why not invoke it earlier, before large-scale land warfare has destroyed most of the Continent?

Thus, Europe's cooperation in building bigger defense forces along the Iron Curtain is likely to depend on America's agreeing to give Europe a much more convincing share in the control of the alliance's nuclear forces. This second alternative is obviously the best option for the countries of Western Europe, so a process of bargaining is already under way. It looks as if Britain has succeeded in obtaining American assistance in building her own nuclear forces, in return for an undertaking to halt the withdrawal of her conventional forces from Germany. France is attempting to follow suit, with less finesse.

But any form of nuclear sharing which involves letting the European countries have their own atomic bombs is liable in time to disintegrate the alliance. For once the European countries have built up their thermonuclear forces, they will be tempted once again to cut their contribution to NATO's forces for limited war and to rely on their capacity to trigger off the SAC; and in this situation America might decide to give up the alliance altogether. This result could be avoided if it were possible for the alliance to create a genuinely collective thermonuclear striking force. But here we come back to the old problem. All-out thermonuclear war is suicidal; and, though each country will want to be able to invoke it on its own behalf in the last extremity of national survival, none will want to be committed to it on behalf of another! Each country wants full control both of the trigger and of the safety catch—and this is impossible in practical terms. The problem would be different if NATO were a federation and not a coalition of sovereign states, and it would become more soluble to the extent that NATO moved toward federation. But even those, like Professor Lincoln Gordon, who have argued most strongly for the creation of a collective NATO deterrent, have so far been unable even to suggest in the most general terms how it might work in existing circumstances.

The problem is, however, much less difficult to solve in practice than in theory. For when the penalty for miscalculating the Western reaction may be total annihilation, Russia will be deterred from aggression by a threat of retaliation which has a much lower degree of credibility than is required to satisfy America's allies. To take a concrete example: the current practice of separating the warhead of atomic weapons from their delivery vehicle so that two countries have a physical veto over their use—America holding the warhead and the ally holding the vehicle—may seem highly unsatisfactory both to America and to the ally concerned; but it is doubtful whether the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

weapons seem any less menacing to Russia for this reason. The problem for NATO is essentially a psychological one—to increase mutual confidence and solidarity so that the Allies no longer demand a degree of certainty about America's response which is out of all proportion to what is really needed to deter the Russians.

In the old days, the best way of increasing Allied solidarity was to exploit Soviet hostility, and Stalin could usually be depended on to come to NATO's aid by making the Russian threat more obvious and frightening. But this familiar process depended on America's willingness to threaten all-out war in defense of Europe, and Europe's lack of any alternative to the American deterrent. The situation is very different today. In the last year or so, Khrushchev's threats over Berlin have produced a rather ambiguous response from both the United States and its European allies. President Eisenhower and Secretary Herter have given contradictory impressions of America's likely reactions to a Soviet military challenge on Berlin. The conflict between London, Bonn, and Paris on this issue is common knowledge.

The fact is that, given the declining belief in the efficacy of the American deterrent, NATO's strategic dilemma will become more, not less, difficult to solve if Allied fear of Soviet attack increases. For this reason, the third possible approach to NATO's dilemma—namely, an agreement with Russia on some form of arms limitation and control on both sides of the Iron Curtain—may soon be seen, not as an alternative to NATO, but as a condition of NATO's survival. It is equally true that such an agreement with Russia would depend in part on increasing mutual confidence between the NATO allies—for any arms limitation affecting European countries but not the Soviet Union itself would leave the former more dependent than they have been on the United States and Britain.

The aim of such an agreement would be to rule out the possibility of a massive surprise attack in Central Europe and to reduce the main danger which worries military and political circles in the West—the possibility that a large-scale war in Europe might develop out of a frontier incident or out of a local upheaval. It would not exclude the theoretical possibility of a Russian invasion mounted from deep inside Soviet territory —but for various reasons this is most unlikely, and is in any case just as possible under present NATO strategy. Finally, success in a regional scheme in Europe would greatly improve the prospects of universal and comprehensive disarmament.

An approach to Russia along these lines has long been recommended as part of a policy of disengagement ("redeployment" is now considered a less disturbing word). It is significant that the most recent converts to the idea are military experts like Viscount Montgomery and Dr. Henry Kissinger. But, though the British government seems willing to experiment along these lines, NATO as a whole has refused to take up the idea, mainly because Dr. Adenauer is unwilling for the Federal Republic to accept any further limitations on its military freedom until Germany has been reunified. For, despite growing evidence to the contrary, the non-nuclear powers tend to believe that somehow or other the possession of nuclear weapons will increase their bargaining power with America and Russia so as to produce concessions on problems of national concern. Bonn's Defense Minister, Franz-Josef Strauss, for example, said in February 1958 that when West Germany had her own atomic weapons she would be able to compel both America and Russia to take the problem of German reunification more seriously.

There is growing support, however, for the view that certain forms of arms limitation in Central Europe, by relaxing tension and de-emphasizing strategic considerations, may create a more favorable context for political settlements than an acceleration in the local arms race, which is otherwise inevitable. For it cannot be assumed that if NATO takes steps which substantially increase its military strength in Western Eu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rope, Russia will not respond to the extent necessary to keep the balance of forces at least as it is at present—thus increasing all the present incentives for the West European countries to acquire their own atomic weapons, and tying the East European countries still more firmly into the Soviet bloc.

THERE are signs that the Western governments are beginning to explore all three of the possible solutions to thermonuclear anarchy—increasing the alliance's capacity for limited war; organizing collective control of the Allied deterrent; and cooperating with Russia on the problems of European security. Moreover, they are beginning to see that these three solutions are complementary. Europe will not agree to increasing its local defense capacity unless America gives it a bigger share in the control of atomic weapons. And mutual confidence between the Allies can be increased to the point where a bargain could be struck along these lines only if Western fear of Soviet attack declines.

I cannot pretend that even if the NATO countries succeed in thus creating the necessary preconditions for stopping the spread of nuclear weapons in the rest of the world, the larger problem will be a simple one. For though it is probable that all the non-Communist countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America would at this time prefer to have their atomic development put under permanent international control rather than live in the thermonuclear jungle which is otherwise inevitable, recalcitrance on the part of Communist China could still wreck any agreement. But this is no reason for not attacking the problem as energetically as possible.

The most interesting consequence of the spread of nuclear weapons capacity is that, for the first time since the cold war began, it has given America and Russia a clear common interest—an interest in trying to freeze the distribution of world power along the lines in which it settled after the end of the Second World War. And it has given their allies a similar common interest in insuring that any such freeze in the balance of power should involve limitations on the freedom of action of America and Russia themselves no less than the rest of the world. This is not just a theoretical prediction, for it has been demonstrated during the course of negotiations for a ban on atomic tests. America and Russia have here shown themselves willing to restrict their own military development and submit to international control for the sake of impeding the spread of atomic weapons to other states—and Britain has succeeded in obtaining greater cooperation from America in the field of atomic weapons as the price of its support for a ban on tests.

So the impact of the new weapons on international relations is not wholly negative. The very magnitude of the danger they represent may evoke a response of comparable grandeur. If it does not, the species homo sapiens may disappear for failing to live up to its name.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CONCEALMENTS OF MARCEL

Proust's Jewishness

MAURICE SAMUEL

AMONG modern literary creations there are on my list three which I believe cannot impart anything approaching their full values without long and sustained intimacy. They are James Joyce's *Ulysses,* Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers,* and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past.* In each case, one may in a single reading experience the kind of joy and wonder which once every few years are awakened in us by a new book; but if we let it go at that we have merely circumnavigated an island continent whose interior would repay years of exploration. Of the three works mentioned, *Remembrance* (for short) is the most rewarding. Gide, on reading part of it, exclaimed: "Dazzled!" So one is. A second, a third, a fiftieth reading, ten and twenty and thirty years of browsing in it gradually overlay the feeling of astonishment with one of mingled awe and gratitude.

Fellow Proustians will of course endorse this panegyric; but when I add that the great work is full of contradictions, confusions, and impossibilities they will undoubtedly raise their eyebrows as if to say: "And isn't Shakespeare, too?" I go on, however, and remark, perhaps to their surprise, that quite otherwise than in Shakespeare the contradictions, confusions, and impossibilities in *Remembrance* are necessary qualities of its greatness. The structure and purpose demand them, the exacting and labyrinthine style fits them. This is not because we are in a half-hallucinatory world like Kafka's; we are among real, very real people, incidents, and circumstances; we are in the historical Paris, France and the world of about 1879 to 1922. What we are confronted with, however, is a unique concept of the novelist's mission.

MAURICE SAMUEL has written many books: on Jewish literary themes, on the Zionist movement, on anti-Semitism. Born in Rumania in 1895 and educated in England, Mr. Samuel came to this country in 1914. His best-known work is *The World of Sholom Aleichem* (1943); others have included *The Great Hatred* (1940), *The Gentleman and the Jew* (1950), *Certain People of the Book* (1955), and *The Professor and the Fossil* (1956). Knopf will soon publish his novel *The Second Crucifixion,* which describes the growing hostility between Jews and Christians in Hadrianic Rome. Mr. Samuel's last previous contribution to COMMENTARY was "Why Israel Misunderstands American Jewry" (October 1953).

II

THE most immediate area of confusion and inner contradiction, leading into the others, is that of the book's purported authorship and personal base. *Remembrance* is presented as a fictional autobiography—fictional in a double sense or in the second degree. The inside author calls himself Marcel—and he is not Proust. At that, whoever he is, he is using his own name to designate an imaginary person, which he, the fictional Marcel, has himself thought up.*

Very well; we accept the device as soon as we perceive it and proceed contentedly till we are pulled up by certain passages which make us blink and ask: "For heaven's sake, where are we supposed to be? Is it in the real world, is it in Marcel's world, or is it in that of his hero?" Thus, we read about a certain rich, retired café owner and his wife who come to the rescue of a widowed niece-in-law and work for her without pay to replace the husband who has fallen in the war. Marcel, in a transport of admiration, exclaims:

> In this book of mine, in which there is not one fact which is not imaginary, nor any real

* I shall speak of Proust when I mean the known author, and of Marcel when I mean—sometimes interchangeably—the fictional author and the nonexisting man he is writing about.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

person concealed under a false name, where everything has been invented to meet the needs of the story, I ought to say that these millionaire relatives of Francoise . . . are people who are really alive . . . and it gives me a childlike pleasure and deep emotion to record here their real name, Larivière. . . . (II, 276)*

The first effect is as though the principal actor in a play within a play were to step out from the interior play and address the stage audience of fellow actors: "Ladies and gentlemen, I beg your permission to stop this performance while I tell you about certain wonderful real-life people, the Larivières, to the following effect. . . . I thank you. The performance will now be resumed." Whatever this may be supposed to mean to the play-acting audience, the announcement is, at first, still part of the play to the real-life audience; that is, to the readers of Proust. On quick second thought, however, it becomes clear that Marcel is speaking as Proust. The Larivières *are* real people; whether or not they have been found and identified by Proustian researchers is immaterial. But Marcel cannot be Proust at some points and an unidentified Marcel elsewhere. Within the body of *Remembrance* the sudden exteriorization dislocates the entire structure. The elaborate pretense of a fictional "I," Marcel, telling someone else's story, collapses. Once Marcel is Proust he is Proust for good.

There are other instances of this involuted self-contradiction. Marcel is an old man when he begins to write seriously, more exactly, when he contemplates the decision to do so. In the marvelous *envoi*—one hundred and thirty large, closely printed pages—he deals with his return from a sanatorium to attend a high society reception, where he realizes what time has done to him and his contemporaries.

I was discovering this destructive action of Time at the very moment when I was about to make clear and to intellectualize in a literary work some realities that had no relation whatever to Time. (II, 1038)

Instead of writing, I had lived in idleness, in the dissipation of a life of pleasure, amid sickness, care of my health and strange humors, and I was taking up my work on the eve of my death, with no knowledge of my craft. (II, 1118–1119)

This is a throwback; the enterprise is completed; it lies before us. Marcel is referring to the time when he thought himself ready for death and doubted that he would live long enough to complete his immense design. We have to assume that *Remembrance* was produced after the belated decision and in an eremitic isolation (as in fact it was). Marcel has nothing to tell us about the actual production. The years of self-immurement and labor are a blank. All he permits himself about them is a few lines immediately preceding those last quoted above:

I had decided to devote to it [the work] all my strength, which was leaving me slowly. . . . Soon I was able to show a few sketches. No one understood a word. Even those who were favorable to my conception of the truths which I intended to carve later in the temple congratulated me on having done them with a microscope, whereas I had, on the contrary, used a telescope. . . . They called me one who grubs for petty details. Moreover, what was the use of undertaking it? I had had a certain facility as a young man. Bergotte† had declared my schoolboy writings "perfect."

Nevertheless, six hundred pages earlier we find this:

And yet, my dear Charles—whom I used to know when I was still so young and you were nearing your grave, it is because he whom you must have regarded as a little fool has made you the hero of one of his volumes that people are beginning to speak of you again and that your name will perhaps live. If in Tissot's picture representing the balcony of the Rue Royale Club . . . people are always drawing attention to yourself, it is because they know that there are traces in you of the character of Swann. (II, 519)

What do we have here? First, once more a specific denial on Marcel's part that he has invented *his* Marcel; second, the information that at the close he already knew himself to be famous and was even entertaining hopes of immortality for his work.

But in the enormous throwback postscript, filled with retrospection, self-analysis, and analysis of his destiny as a writer, Marcel

* All references are to the Random House edition of *Remembrance of Things Past,* translated by Scott-Montcrieff, in two volumes.

† When the chips are down, Bergotte is Anatole France, and Proust is referring to his first published book, *Les Plaisirs et les Jours.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ignores the crucial admission of his "reality" within the novel, and the equally crucial fact, so bound up with his development as a writer, of his success. He has come back to the impossible stance: "I'm using my name, which doesn't represent a living personality, to cover a person of my invention, an aspiring writer whom I portray as vanishing from the world unfulfilled." The reader cannot disentangle the skein; he is not supposed to try; he must remain, for Marcel's (and, we shall see, for Proust's) purpose in a state of receptive bafflement.

III

Related to the necessary confusion of identities and truth-fiction is the equally necessary confusion of Time (and of time).

Time (with a capital) is one of the principal characters in *Remembrance,* or one of its dimensions, fused with the other three in an Einsteinian continuum. The French title *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* means literally "In Search of [the] Lost Time"; more accurate titles would have been *The Overcoming of Time,* or *The Liberation from Time.* In the famous passage on the piece of cake dipped in tea, Marcel relates an experience which recurs toward the end of the book in connection with the tinkling of a spoon and the feel of a sunken flagstone under his foot. It is a crucial key experience. Unplanned, unpredictable in its effects, the tasting of the piece of tea-soaked cake sends a shudder through his body.

> An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory—this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence. . . . I had ceased now to feel mediocre, accidental, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? (I, 34)

By a tremendous effort he calls up the connection out of the depths of his memory. It was "the taste of the little crumb of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray . . . when I used to say goodbye to her in her bedroom, my aunt Leonie used to give me dipping it first in her own cup of real or of lime-flower tea."

Then follows the loving evocation of all the far-off world of his childhood. But the bliss, the precious essence, which flowed at first from the actual tasting is absent from the effort to establish the connection and also from the resurrected picture. *That* sensation had come, unbidden, unamenable to recall, from the fleeting transcendence of Time, brought about by a seeming triviality; and the transcendence of Time is the transcendence of the mediocre, the accidental, and the mortal in man.

What is portrayed here as the highest form of human self-realization parallels closely Schopenhauer's description of the happiness which follows the transcendence of the will. One need only substitute "time" for "will" almost everywhere in the following:

> When some external cause or inward disposition lifts us suddenly out of the stream of willing, delivers knowledge from the slavery of the will, the attention is no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will, and thus observes them without personal interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively. . . . Then all at once the peace which we were always seeking, but which always fled from us . . . comes to us of its own accord, and it is well with us. It is the painless state which Epicurus prized as the highest good and as the state of the gods . . . we keep the Sabbath of the penal servitude of willing; the wheel of Ixion stands still.
>
> It is this blessedness of will-less perception which casts an enchanting glamour over the past and distant. . . . We can deliver ourselves from all suffering just as well through present objects as through distant ones whenever we raise ourselves to a purely objective contemplation of them, and so we are able to bring about the illusion that only the objects are present and not we ourselves. (*The World as Idea,* Bk. III)

The function of art, the mission of the artist-novelist, as seen in *Remembrance,* is to conquer or overcome time, not in the obvious sense of creating an immortal work, but in the personal experiencing and imparting of mastery over time, the elimination of our wretched awareness of subjection to time.

Liberation from time plays hob with "time" in the story. As we have seen, Marcel complains (as Proust did, openly) that his friendly critics congratulated him on having used the microscope, whereas he had used the telescope. He uses both—simultaneously.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The result is aesthetically thrilling, editorially impossible.

Thus we learn that Marcel and his first love, Gilberte, the daughter of Charles Swann and the former Odette de Crécy, are of about the same age, and that Gilberte was about fourteen or fifteen when Marcel used to play with her on the Champs Elysées. (I, 365) We also learn that Swann and Odette met at about the time of the Murcia floods (I, 173), which took place in 1879. A long and for Swann unhappy love relationship existed between him and Odette before they married. Swann had ceased to love her. He cries out at one point: "To think I have wasted years of my life, that I have longed for death, that the greatest love I have ever known has been for a woman who did not please me, who was not in my style." (I, 292)

And then Swann and Odette disappear from the story to reappear later as a married couple (though frequent mention of Swann and his "unfortunate marriage" occurs much earlier, before the Swann story is broached). Swann and Odette cannot have married before 1884. Therefore 1885 is approximately the date of Marcel's birth. Nevertheless he represents himself as a young man about town when the Dreyfus affair, which has a prominent place in the story, broke upon France. That happened in 1894 when Marcel, according to "chronology," cannot yet have been ten years old.

He represents himself as a doddering, elderly man soon after the close of World War I. At the high society reception mentioned (1919? 1920?) he overhears himself referred to as "Papa"—and since he is not married, a moderately advanced age, at the least, is indicated. But he was, again by the "factual" record of the story, just past his middle thirties, if that. The grotesque havoc which the years have wrought on him and on some of his contemporaries is inexplicable, but necessary. He needed a long contemporaneous perspective, that of a sexagenarian, at least; and so he juggles with time, he telescopes it, and he also brings the material close for microscopic examination. This wonderful performance enables the reader, while noting the unacceptability of the account in a corner of his consciousness, to participate in the overwhelming reality of Marcel's conquest of Time.

IV

We have here and there, especially toward the end, inconsistencies of the ordinary kind, as if the author's memory were failing him. These are of no significance. Significant and remarkable is the purposeful system of inconsistencies and contradictions into which are built the (here related) subjects of homosexuality and Jewish identity.

Both occupy dominant places from beginning to end, and they are often intermingled in a curious, one might say a dizzying, fashion. By his own account, meaning only by his own flat statement, Marcel is neither a homosexual nor of Jewish descent. His love affairs are exclusively with women; and if he himself is not a believing Christian, he has grown up in an irreproachably French, impeccably Catholic home, and retains a sentimental affection for its religious observances. However, his obsessive preoccupation with homosexuals and Jews, with homosexuality and Judaism, and, still more, his frequent linking of the two, coming on top of his special evasiveness, as set forth below, drive us to certain strange conclusions.

To begin with the homosexuality. Apart from his absorption in the subject, Marcel exhibits a knowledge of its obscurest symptoms and effects which, we imagine, can be found in a heterosexual only if he is a psychiatrist specializing in this field. The heterosexual layman must assume that the knowledge is real, but in any case the manner in which Marcel acquires it soon awakens the suspicion, then crystallizes the certainty, that he is "hiding" from us something that he is disclosing without a formal confession. This too is a not uncommon device in the novel, but here the implications carry us beyond the fictional.

Marcel has his first glimpse of homosexual relations when he is a youngster. By accident he sees and hears Mlle. Vinteuil and her girl friend making love in the former's house at Montjouvain (I, 122 ff.). As a youth, and again by accident, he sees the Baron de Charlus wooing the ex-tailor Jupien in the courtyard of the Guermantes mansion, part of which has been rented to Marcel's family; and on this occasion Marcel manages by an intricate maneuver, itself

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

full of the accidental, to get next to the room which the men are using, and to overhear them through the transom (II, 1 ff.). It is quite by accident—I am omitting a number of other instances—that toward the end of the book, walking through the darkened streets of wartime Paris, Marcel stumbles into a little hotel in which, again by an intricate maneuver, he is able, this time, to watch Charlus, now a convulsive masochist as well as a homosexual, being ministered to by young men hired for the purpose by Jupien.

One has to think of Marcel as a voyeur with a special bent and unbelievable good luck. Winking at the reader's suspicions, he writes mockingly: "The affairs of this sort of which I have been a spectator have always been presented in a setting of the most imprudent and improbable character, as if such revelations were to be the reward of an action full of risk, though in part clandestine." (II, 8)

Besides being reduced to these impossible shifts to account for his expertise, which anyhow declares his sexual proclivities (and outside this framework, those of Proust), Marcel, going helplessly, necessarily, and by the law of artistic truth a step further, complicates (and by the same token clarifies) the situation by dwelling endlessly on the compulsion of every homosexual to dwell endlessly on himself and his peculiarity. In short, Marcel positively insists on revealing his invert fixation by means of serio-comic inadvertencies to which you could not hold him in a court of law; and when he reproduces the interminable chatter of Charlus, the homosexual *par excellence,* he is deliberately drawing attention to himself and his own compulsion to talk.

Thus Charlus is asked whether a certain person is a homosexual, and we read:

> Charlus drew himself up with a forbidding air. "Ah, my dear Sir, I as you know, live in a world of abstraction, all that sort of thing interests me only from a transcendental point of view," he replied, with the touchy susceptibility peculiar to men of his kind, and the affectation of grandiloquence that characterized his conversation. "To me, you understand, it is only general principles that are of interest, I speak to you of this as I might of the law of gravitation." But these moments of irritable reaction in which the Baron sought to conceal his true life lasted but a short time compared with the hours of continual progression in which he allowed it to be guessed, displayed it with an irritating complacency, the need to confide being stronger in him than the fear of divulging his secret. (II, 590)

V

The two features in Marcel's treatment of Jews and Jewishness which point to his burden of Jewish identity are: first, his close interweaving of homosexuality—once it is clear that he is a homosexual—and Jewishness (the word "Jewishness" has no cultural-religious connotation here, it indicates only awareness of Jewish descent, partial or entire); second, his strikingly ambivalent attitude on Jewishness—respect and contempt, attraction and loathing, each expressed in such extreme emotional terms that it is impossible to see him as anything but a Jew. With the first of these features I deal immediately; the second (which already appears as a motif in the first) I leave to the confrontation with Proust as the author of *Remembrance.*

It is once more the figure of Charlus that moves Marcel to his self-revealing utterances. Charlus, the French *grand seigneur,* is most decidedly not Jewish, and Marcel's interweaving of homosexuality and Judaism does not imply that he believes homosexuality to be especially prevalent among Jews. What one suspects is that only a Jewish homosexual with a deep, hidden malaise about his Jewishness and his homosexuality (and perhaps not so hidden, for we have heard him refer to his own "strange humours") could have turned out the following passages, in which homosexuality and Jewishness are seen as parallel and equivalent destinies:

> He [Charlus] belonged to that race of beings, less paradoxical than they appear, whose ideal is manly simply because their temperament is feminine and who in their life resemble only in appearance the rest of mankind. . . . Race upon which a curse weighs and which must live amid falsehood and perjury, because it knows the world to regard as punishable and scandalous, as an inadmissible thing, that which constitutes for every human creature the greatest happiness in life . . . friends without friendships, despite all those which their charm, frequently recognized, inspires and their hearts, often generous, would gladly feel; but can we describe as friendship those relations which flourish only by virtue

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a lie and from which the first outburst of sincerity . . . would make them to be expelled with disgust, unless they are dealing with an impartial, that is to say a sympathetic mind . . . just as certain judges assume and are more inclined to pardon murder in inverts and treason in Jews for reasons derived from original sin and racial predestination. (II, 13)

Their honor precarious, their liberty provisional, lasting only until the discovery of their crime . . . excluded even, save on the days of general disaster when the majority rally round the victim as the Jews rallied round Dreyfus, from the sympathy, at times the society of their fellows, in whom they inspire only disgust at seeing themselves as they are . . . like the Jews, again (save some who will associate only with others of their race and have always on their lips ritual words and consecrated pleasantries), shunning one another, seeking out those who are most directly their opposite, who do not desire their company, pardoning their rebuffs, moved to ecstacy by their condescension; but also brought into the company of their own kind by the ostracism that strikes them, the opprobrium under which they have fallen, having finally been invested, by a persecution similar to that of Israel, with the physical and moral characteristics of a race, sometimes beautiful, often hideous . . . and, going in search . . . of cases of inversion in history, taking pleasure in recalling that Socrates was one of themselves, as the Israelites claim that Jesus was one of them. . . . (II, 13–14)

In this last quotation Marcel is speaking mostly about the assimilating Jew. Elsewhere he extends the view to the Jewish people as a whole, or to one or another of its non-assimilating elements:

. . . when they [certain homosexual types] seek to communicate their taste to others, they approach not so much those who seem to them to be predisposed towards it . . . as those who seem to them to be worthy of it, just as others preach Zionism, conscientious objection to military service, Saint-Simonism, vegetarianism or anarchy. (II, 17)

I do not know of a more moving lament over the historic condition of the Jewish people than the sentences which begin with "Race upon which a curse weighs" and "Their honor precarious, their liberty provisional"; or anything as grotesquely comical, intentionally or not, in the very midst of deep pathos, as the last words of the section entitled *Cities of the Plain* (in the French *Sodome et Gomorrhe*):

These descendants of the Sodomites, so numerous that we may apply to them that other verse of Genesis: "If a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered," have established themselves throughout the entire world; they have had access to every profession and pass so easily into the most exclusive clubs that, whenever a Sodomite fails to secure election, the blackballs are, for the most part, cast by other Sodomites, who are anxious to penalize sodomy, having inherited the falsehood that enabled their ancestors to escape from the accursed city. It is possible that they may return there one day. Certainly they form in every land an oriental colony, cultured, musical, malicious, which has certain charming qualities and intolerable defects. . . . I have thought it well to utter here a provisional warning against the lamentable error of proposing (just as people have encouraged a Zionist movement) to create a Sodomist movement and rebuild Sodom. For, no sooner had they arrived there than the Sodomites would leave the town so as not to have the appearance of belonging to it. . . . They would repair to Sodom only on days of supreme necessity, when their own town was empty, at those seasons when hunger drives the wolf from the woods; in other words, everything would go on very much as it does today in London, Berlin, Rome, Petrograd* or Paris. (II, 25–26)

THESE are Marcel's considered judgments. Brief pronouncements in the same sense occur elsewhere as *obiter dicta*. A summing up leaves us uncertain whether he looked on homosexuality as, on the whole, a privilege or an affliction. He plays with this question as he has Charlus (and himself) play with the question of his sexual fixation:

He (Charlus) refused to see that for the last nineteen hundred years all conventional homosexuality—that of Plato's young friends as well as that of Virgil's shepherds—had disappeared, that what survives and increases is only the involuntary, the neurotic kind, which we conceal from other people and disguise to ourselves. And M. de Charlus would have been wrong in not denying frankly the pagan genealogy. *In exchange for a little plastic beauty* [my italics, M.S.] how vast the moral superiority. . . . It is the

* "Petrograd" tells us that Marcel could not have written this before 1914 or after 1924 (but Proust died in 1922); he therefore wrote it between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty-seven, a wild anachronism if he began the novel as an aging man.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

homosexuality that survives in spite of obstacles, the thing of scorn and loathing, that is the only true form, the only form that can be found conjoined in a person with an enhancement of his moral qualities. (II, 524)

"Involuntary . . . neurotic . . . disguise to ourselves . . . enhancement of his moral qualities. . . ." The statement flies apart under our gaze. How can the enhancement of moral qualities, springing from a compulsion neurosis, go hand in hand with a reluctance to acknowledge the beneficent source of the improvement? If a man knows himself to be more moral because of a certain psychic disturbance he may hide the source of his merits from the persecution of the world; but he will not be ashamed of it within himself.

Yet the concealment from others and from himself is only intermittent. The teasing of his listeners by Charlus (and of his readers by Marcel) does not let up. Thus, concerning the affair between Charlus and the violinist Morel:

. . . speaking generally, let us say that M. de Charlus, notwithstanding the aggravation of his *malady* [my italics, M. S.] which perpetually urged him to reveal, to insinuate, sometimes boldly to invent compromising details, did intend, during this period in his life, to make it known that Morel was not a man of the same sort as himself and that they were friends and nothing more. This did not prevent him . . . from contradicting himself at times . . . whether he forgot himself at such moments and told the truth, or invented a lie, boastingly, or from a sentimental affectation or because he thought it amusing to baffle his questioner. (II, 528)

The equivalence of homosexuality and Jewishness is in some passages mingled with the analysis of the homosexual's alternations between reticence and exhibitionism:

. . . a vice (so M. de Charlus used at one time to style it) to which he gave now the genial aspect of a mere failing, extremely common, attractive on the whole and almost amusing, like laziness, absentmindedness or greed. Conscious of the curiosity which his own striking personality aroused, M. de Charlus derived a certain pleasure from satisfying, whetting, sustaining it. Just as a Jewish journalist will come forward day after day as the champion of Catholicism, not, probably, with any hope of being taken seriously, but simply in order not to disappoint the good-natured amusement of his readers. . . . (II, 527)

VI

PERHAPS it will be suggested that Marcel was no more a homosexual, with all his absorption in the subject, than he was a snob, with all his absorption (in both senses) in high society. We shall be reminded that he often decries and lampoons snobbery; so he does, as the self-made millionaire often philosophizes on the vanity of riches and goes on accumulating them, and a king on the happier lot of the ploughboy without having the slightest desire to change places with him. We are begging the question; the fact remains that Marcel is and wants us to know that he is a homosexual. He is, and apparently does not want us to know that he is, Jewish.

"Apparently," but not in the ordinary sense; it is more like: "I can't help revealing that I'm a homosexual and a Jew, but I disclose the first playfully; the second reluctantly, *à contrecoeur.*" Why the distinction, the difference in method? Perhaps it is that Marcel, despite Swann's brilliant social success, looks on homosexuality as less of a bar than Jewishness in the fahionable world which he must enter and describe, so that the technical admission would complicate his task; perhaps he (thence Proust) thinks himself the kind of Jew whose Jewishness has been forgotten, is never commented on, though he himself must advert to it. He is nevertheless well aware of society's long memory. A Mme. Gaillardon says of Swann: "I know he's a converted Jew, and all that, and his parents and grandparents before him. But they do say that the converted ones are worse about their religion than the practicing ones, and that it's all a pretence." (I, 257)

There is more to be said for the idea that at times Marcel lost track of his identity. The "Overture" to *Remembrance* opens with Marcel, an aging man, trying to fall asleep. In the various stages between waking and sleeping he imagines himself now a child in his old bedroom, long ago demolished, now in the house where he actually is, now in other places where he once lived, and reconstructing his surroundings according to the relevant illusion he sets them whirling in the darkness. Walls, furniture, windows slide about him as he passes from scene to scene. As for himself: "When I awoke at midnight, not knowing where I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was, I could not be sure at first who I was." (I, 5) Something like this has happened to all of us; that Marcel chose the experience for the opening to the "Overture" is certainly not accidental.

VII

The question whether study of an author's life enables us to see deeper into his novel or play, and get more out of it, has recently been revived in connection with Proust's work. For myself, I cannot remember having been helped in this way with Proust or anyone else. It is always possible to say, of course, that the help is indirect and works through a heightening of interest, but this is not what is meant; or that the help is contained in subliminal suggestions, and if this is what is meant it does not make for intelligible discussion. On the other hand I owe much to studies which treat an author's work wholly or chiefly as a self-contained world. Milton Hindus's beautiful and moving *The Proustian Vision* (Columbia University Press, 1954) though not the only study of its kind to raise the subject, sent me to a re-reading of Schopenhauer. My conclusions are not quite the same as Mr. Hindus's, and the passages I quote support a different point of view. Nevertheless Schopenhauer, too, has added to my appreciation of Proust. Thus it may be argued that a biography which tells us that Proust was deeply influenced by Schopenhauer would be useful. But that is already "interior" information. Also, the affinity with Schopenhauer may be a coincidence, would have existed if Proust had never looked into Schopenhauer. Moreover, familiarity with an author's life may warp our judgment. Knowing what I do about George Gissing I invest *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* with a degree of poignancy which the text probably does not justify.

I am wholly in agreement with Mr. Hindus when he says: "It seems best not to fall into the genetic fallacy, and to treat Proust's ideas in themselves. We ought not to assume too easily that we know their source or that we may dismiss them because of their origin."

Against Mr. Hindus appears George D. Painter in his scholarly *Proust, the Early Years* Little Brown, 1959. Mr. Painter is emphatic to the point of "pleasant truculence" (as Angus Wilson says) in his espousal of the contrary view:

> It has become one of the dogmas of Proustian criticism that his novel can and must be treated as a closed system. . . . Monsieur X. is praised for having "emptied his mind"—did he have to empty it of so very much?—"of all Proustian matter extraneous to the novel . . ." "I do not propose," says Professor Y., "in this study, which is an attempt to interpret Proust's great novel, to discuss the external facts of his life. . . ." But they like to have it both ways. . . . I have not tried to deny Proust's homosexuality—on the contrary, I have given the first full account of it based on evidence. . . .
>
> . . . It is surely relevant to know of Proust's novel what the novel meant to the author. . . . What do they know of *A la Recherche* who only *A la Recherche* know?

In the first part of this essay I have tried to prove that an attentive and uninhibited reader of *Remembrance* must conclude that Marcel, and therefore Proust, was a homosexual and a Jew. Whether he was exclusively homosexual is unimportant. The "evidence" produced by Mr. Painter is in my opinion trivial by comparison with the massive confession in the book itself. It puzzles me that Mr. Hindus should have had to lean on Gide's diaries for the final "pinning down" of the facts. Certainly, as the following quotation shows, Gide opens the eyes of the blindest and puts an end to all speculation (from the entry May 14, 1921, published, according to Mr. O'Brien, translator of the Journals, in 1939):

> Spent an hour yesterday evening with Proust. . . . Although having begun, as soon as I arrived, to talk of homosexuality, he interrupted himself to ask me if I could enlighten him as to the teaching of the Gospels. . . . When I say a word or two about my *Memoirs:* "You can tell anything," he exclaims, "but on condition that you don't say *I*." But that won't suit me. Far from denying his homosexuality he exhibits it, and I could say almost boasts of it. He claims never to have loved women except spiritually and never to have known love except with men."*

"You can tell anything, but on condition that you don't say *I*"! What can Mr. Painter mean (unless he wants to call Gide a wholesale fabricator) with his "the first full account of it [Proust's homosexuality] *based on evidence?*"

* *The Journals of André Gide,* translated by Justin O'Brien (Knopf).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Later we find in Gide the following, and other passages like it: "I have read Proust's latest pages . . . with, at first, a shock of indignation. Knowing what he thinks, what he is, it is hard for me to see in them anything but a pretence, a desire to protect himself, a camouflage of the cleverest sort . . ." (Dec. 2, 1921).

Is it possible that the subtle-minded Gide did not read into Proust's pages the confession, and the readiness to confess, which I see staring from them? Perhaps Gide meant that he wanted Proust to make the confession frankly, "manfully," in defiance of the world. If Proust did not do it that way it was not for lack of courage. The reasons were artistic and involve much more than the treatment of homosexuality.

VIII

And all the time we must bear in mind that we can never know Proust in person; we can only know studies of him, works of art (as histories always are) in themselves. Mr. Painter's is thorough, honest, sympathetic, but it is Mr. Painter's, and he cannot help establishing associations which may be only his surmises. Of Proust's relation to his mother (wholly Jewish by birth) Mr. Painter says in one place: "His first attempt to love and be loved by someone other than his mother—that is, to escape from incest—had failed," and this, suggests Mr. Painter, was a contributory cause in Proust's sexual aberration. Concerning Charles Haas, the prototype of Charles Swann, Mr. Painter says:

> "But it may well be, as some have suggested, that he [Proust] saw Haas even at this early period as a hero and example, another self. Haas, like himself, was a Jew, a pariah by birth; yet by his own merits of intelligence and charm he had made society a career open to the talents. Proust set himself to do the same. Social acceptance was a symbol—though as he was to discover, an illusory one—of salvation.

What deeper meaning, what added values, do we find in *Remembrance* when we have these facts and Mr. Painter's interpretation of them? And suppose we make our own interpretation, are we any the better off in respect to the meaning of the book? Contemplation of Proust's life as recorded by others (or even as witnessed by ourselves, if we were contemporaries), spiced with some slapdash psychoanalysis, is a fascinating occupation—and has nothing to do with the wisdom, beauty, and horror of *Remembrance*. Mr. Stephen Spender, in a recent article, says: "As Bernard Shaw, another Dubliner, well understood, Joyce's aesthetic egocentricity was largely the result of his early life of feckless poverty and uprootedness in Dublin." Perhaps it was, given that James Joyce was not his brother Stanislas, which leaves the riddle where it was. But we are none the wiser for it about *Ulysses*. I have read most of what is obtainable on the life of James Joyce; I have marveled at his scrupulous and laborious reproduction of real-life Dublin; and by these studies I have added nothing to my speculations on the ultimate significance of *Ulysses*. Equally scrupulous and laborious is Mr. Painter's reproduction of all the details, personalities, and circumstances of Proust's life and their correspondences (to be amplified in a second volume —which I greatly look forward to) with details, personalities, and circumstances in *Remembrance*. The experience has been for me one more vindication of Mr. Hindus's apt reference to the genetic fallacy (though Mr. Hindus himself succumbs to it in several places!).

But if the facts of a writer's life, while remaining recognizable in his book, are so transmuted that they offer no key to the order of the new universe he has created, the work will often cast a sharp light on the writer. Stephen Dedalus is often the kind of Joyce whom the latter's biographers are trying to portray. Proust's treatment of the Jewish theme testifies unmistakably to a real-life inner struggle of the utmost cruelty. For at one and the same time we know (independently of the pointer in the homosexual-Jewishness link) that only an assimilating Jew working his way into Gentile high society could have been capable of that treatment, and that the treatment bespeaks many moments of rage, frustration, shame, and self-hatred.

Swann, the "nice" Jew, enters the story very early (I, 11), an attractive, gracious, courteous figure, whose romantic connections with the highest society—the Comte de Paris, French Pretender, and the Prince of Wales are among his intimates—are unsuspected by Marcel's upper-middle-class

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

family. Swann would be the last person ever to refer to them.* Proust simply can't get over the perfect tactfulness and charming simplicity of Swann. True, Swann has made a disastrous marriage, after the long love affair to be described further on; his wife is not "received," though he and Marcel's family are neighbors; but Swann himself, an old and valued friend, is a frequent, and almost the only, visitor on summer evenings; and his admirable bearing, his thoughtful little kindnesses, his wit, make up, with the above-mentioned qualities, a character as attractive to his hosts as to the reader.

Bloch, the "nasty" Jew (he heads a whole list, unrelieved except by Swann) turns up on page 68. The manner of his introduction is a prelude to his frequent appearances throughout the more than 2,200 pages of the two volumes:

> I had heard Bergotte spoken of for the first time by a friend older than myself, for whom I had a strong admiration, a precious youth of the name of Bloch. Hearing me express my love of the *Nuit d'Octobre,* he had burst into a bray of laughter, like a bugle call, and told me, by way of warning: "You must conquer your vile taste for A. de Musset, Esq. He is a bad egg, one of the very worst. I am bound to admit, natheless," he added graciously, "that even he, and the man Racine, did, each of them, once in his life, compose a line which is not only fairly rhythmical, but has also what is in my eyes the supreme merit of meaning absolutely nothing. . . ."

Great changes occur in Swann in the course of the story, before he dies in the middle of the second volume; Bloch, surviving to the end, is permanently fixed as introduced, or becomes more so: able, brash, noisy, affected, fundamentally asinine, tactless, and careerist.

In Proust's introduction of the Jewish theme there is a cool detachment on the author's part which at this stage rules out the idea that the author is himself part Jewish and will later react in an unmistakably Jewish manner:

> My grandfather made out that, whenever I formed a strong attachment to one of my friends and brought him home with me, that friend was invariably a Jew; to which he would not have objected on principle—indeed, his own friend Swann was of Jewish extraction—had he not found that the Jews whom I chose as friends were not usually of the best type.† And so I was hardly ever able to bring a new friend home without my grandfather's humming the "O, God of our fathers" from *La Juive,* or else "Israel, break they chain," singing the tune alone, of course, to an um-ti-tum-ti-tum-tra-la; but I used to be afraid of my friend's recognising the sound and so being able to reconstruct the words . . . These little eccentricities on my grandfather's part implied no ill-will whatsoever toward my friends. . . . (69–70)

I regard the suggestion (that the idea of the author's Jewishness might cross the reader's mind so early in the book) as ruled out because all the above is so harmless, so good-natured; though the author is afraid that his friends will recognize the tune (*afraid,* that is, he knows they will be made uncomfortable) his 100 per cent Gentile withers are unwrung and it does not occur to him that his grandfather is displaying the malice of the half senile. Later, when we are convinced from the text that the author is in fact Jewish, this introductory detachment of his makes *us* uncomfortable. At any rate, it does me. If I were a mulatto and couldn't bring home a Negro friend without my all-white grandfather humming the tune of *Swanee Ribber* or *Old Black Joe,* I shouldn't by any means absolve the old man of ill will. In the book we are not, of course, told the degree of Marcel's Jewishness; we have to assume finally that it is one-half, at most, for if *this* grandfather is himself a Jew he is quite mad. (Nor, we take it, is his wife Jewish.) How, then, did Marcel's Jewish parent take "these little idiosyncracies"? And why doesn't Marcel add to "indeed, his own friend Swann was of Jewish extraction," "just like his son-in-law," or his daughter-in-law? Why, sensitive boy that he is, doesn't he in any case protest to his grandfather? We know the answer by now: because Marcel has to play the non-Jew as far as he can.

I permit myself a kind of prolepsis here. My examination of Marcel's and Proust's responses to the Jewish problem is far from the kind of amateur psychoanalysis I dislike.

* A typical Proustian confusion. Swann is at this time of his life recreating for himself a new position in society, on a very modest level, and has become an offensive name-dropper (I, 331 ff.).

† Marcel tells of no other Jewish friend he ever had and brought home.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I am dealing with responses recognized long before Freud was born. The escaping Jew aiming at a social career does what he can not to notice an anti-Semitic jibe, and while on the one hand he associates himself to the liberalism of the non-anti-Semitic Gentile, and also refuses to hear and see evil, he gives vent to his resentment at his own fate by speaking of "the wrong kind of Jew" with a savagery which apes and surpasses that of the most inveterate Gentile anti-Semite. All this has been said by Proust—and here is Proust's description of Bloch, grown a man, entering the drawing room of the high-born Mme. de Villeparisis:

> He had his chin pointed now by a goatbeard, wore double glasses and a long frock coat, and carried a glove like a roll of papyrus in his hand. The Rumanians, the Egyptians, the Turks may hate the Jews. But in a French drawing room the differences between those peoples are not so apparent, and an Israelite making his entry as though he were emerging from the heart of the desert, his body crouching like a hyena's, his neck thrust obliquely forward, spreading himself in profound "salaams," completely satisfies a certain taste for the oriental. Only it is essential that the Jew should not actually be "in" society, otherwise he will readily assume the aspect of a lord, and his manners become so Gallicized that on his face a rebellious nose, growing like a nasturtium in any but the right direction, will make one think rather of Mascarille's nose than of Solomon's. . . . Marvelous racial power that from the dawn of time thrusts to the surface, even in Paris, on the stage of our theatres, behind the pigeonholes of our public offices, at a funeral, in the street, a solid phalanx, setting their mark upon our modern ways of hairdressing, absorbing, making us forget, disciplining the frock coat which on them remains not at all unlike the garment in which Assyrian scribes are depicted in ceremonial attire on the frieze of a monument at Susa before the gates of the palace of Darius. (I, 851)

I SUBMIT that we have in this superb passage an ungovernable outburst of repressed malice; but for its high literary level it might have appeared in Streicher's *Der Voelkische Beobachter*. We have the same note again, in an absolutely unprovoked, irrelevant aside, *à propos de bottes,* on Swann, who ate a lot of gingerbread because "he suffered from a racial eczema and from the constipation of the prophets . . ." (I, 306).

I have mentioned how Swann, once a perfect gentleman, married the ex-prostitute Odette de Crécy, had to rebuild a social world on a lower level, and became a ridiculous dropper of socially third-rate names.

> It will perhaps be objected here that what this really implied was that the simplicity of the fashionable Swann had been nothing more than a supreme refinement of vanity, and that, like certain Israelites, my parents' old friend had contrived to illustrate in turn all the stages through which his race had passed, from the crudest and coarsest form of snobbishness to the highest pitch of good manners. (I, 332)

In these three passages the author steps recognizably into the real world, our world, and without the announcement which heralds his tribute to the Larivières. It is no use to appeal to artistic power, to plead, for instance, that Shakespeare's overwhelming portrayals of Iago and Richard III do not point to a streak of villainy in him. It is not the power of the portrayal that is in itself decisive; it is a certain inside note. We would know with complete certainty that the author of *Huckleberry Finn* hates slavery, that the author of *Oliver Twist* is deeply affected by social problems, even if the books had been published anonymously. To step down somewhat, the author of *By Love Possessed, The Just and the Unjust, Guard of Honor,* must, whoever he is, be illiberal in his attitude toward Jews and Negroes. In *Remembrance,* which is called a continuous novel, and is a life-work, a series of novels, the stigmata of the author declare themselves as plainly as his genius. A good deal might be quoted in illustration; I confine myself to a few passages.

> One day when we were sitting on the sands, Saint-Loup and I, we heard issuing from a canvas tent against which we were leaning a torrent of imprecations against the swarm of Israelites that infested Balbec. "You can't go a yard without meeting them," said the voice. "I am not in principle irremediably hostile to the Jewish nation, but there is a plethora of them. You hear nothing but, 'I thay, Apraham, I've chust theen Chacop.' " The man who thus inveighed against Israel emerged at last from the tent; we raised our eyes to behold the anti-Semite. It was my old friend Bloch. (I, 558–9)

The staggering unself-consciousness of Proust as he wrote this! And as he wrote the picture of the grandfather! I insist that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only a programmatically assimilating Jew, moving in the world of *Remembrance,* could have produced the totality of this material. The more the writer struggles to free himself the more he becomes psychologically entangled. He writes: "I knew that, as deep, as ineluctable as is their Jewish patriotism or Christian atavism in those who imagine themselves to be the most emancipated of their race, there dwelt . . ." (II, 669).

This is an intellectual echo of Mme. Gaillardon's primitive babble about converted Jews. By itself it could have come from a non-Jew; taken with all the rest it can have come only from a Jew. The same is true of the author's reflections on Swann in the midst of the Dreyfus upheaval.

> . . . having come to the premature term of his life, like the weary animal that is goaded on, he cried out against these persecutions and was returning to the spiritual fold of his fathers. (I, 1130)

> . . . this new loss of caste would have been better described as a recasting, for it made him return to the ways in which his forebears had trodden, and from which he had turned aside to mix with the aristocracy. (I, 1131)

What is, again, internally assimilating-Jewish here is the fact that nothing whatsoever is told of Swann to indicate that he was actually "returning to the fold of his fathers." Not a single gesture, physical or mental, is adduced. Implied, we must suppose, is that automatic response of the Jew empty or emptied of Judaism who, rebuffed and offended, takes refuge in: "Yes, I'm a Jew, and proud of it," and has no idea what there is to be proud of; unless, like poor Leopold Bloom when he is badgered by "the citizen," he suddenly bethinks himself: "Mendelssohn was a Jew, and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza. And the Savior was a Jew and his father was a Jew."

IX

It is useful to compare *Remembrance* with *Dr. Zhivago** in the matter of Jewishness and Jewish self-consciousness. That Pasternak, as in the quoted instance of Cozzens, makes his own views known through some of his characters is universally recognized. One of the curious twists of the Zhivago case is the failure of the Russian censorship to realize that the hostility to the Communist regime here expressed issues from intellectual attitudes so generally discredited that the book should have been welcomed by Communists with the delighted remark: "See the kind of person who doesn't like us?" For Zhivago and the others who are presented sympathetically are critical of Communism on grounds acceptable only to an insignificant and disesteemed minority.

When Zhivago protests: "Why on earth should I know and worry myself sick over everything? History hasn't consulted me. I have to put up with whatever happens, so why shouldn't I ignore the facts? . . . Whom am I to believe? And I have to go on living. I've got a family" he disqualifies himself as a critic of *any* regime (apart from the fact that, characteristically, he abandons his family).

When in the first winter of the revolution Zhivago at Varykino confides to his diary: "What happiness to work from dawn to dusk for your family and for yourself, to build a roof over their heads, to till the soil and feed them, to create your own world, like Robinson Crusoe . . ." he writes himself out of the social consciousness of the modern world.

And when as a doctor-prisoner of the Bolshevik partisans in Siberia, present at a skirmish with the Whites, he feels himself at one with the enemy ("All his sympathies were on the side of those heroically dying children. With all his heart he wished them success. They belonged to families who were probably akin to him in spirit, in education, in moral discipline [!] and values") and nevertheless takes up a rifle and starts shooting (though as a non-combatant he doesn't have to—only he just can't lie still while things are going on), and more or less accidentally wounds two Whites, perhaps kills one, the reader can only exclaim: "Good God! What a jumbled-up, indeterminable creature! Who cares about *his* views on Communism?" Similarly we have Lara, Zhivago's beloved, harking back to pre-war, pre-revolutionary Russia in phrases that automatically invalidate her criticisms of Communism:

---

* By Boris Pasternak, translated from the Russian by Max Hayward and Manya Harari, American edition, Pantheon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I can remember a time when we all accepted the peaceful outlook of the last century. It was taken for granted that you listened to reason, that it was right and natural for your conscience to do so. For a man to die at the hand of another was a rare and exceptional thing, something quite out of the ordinary. Murders happened in plays, newspapers, and detective stories, not in everyday life.

Czarist Russia, with its cruelties, its brutalized peasantry, its oppressed workers, its pogroms, its intellectual repressions and dishonesties ("it was taken for granted that you listened to reason") as a lost paradise! Really now! What was the Communist censorship afraid of?

We have no doubts after reading *Dr. Zhivago* as to Boris Pasternak's mystic-spiritual identity. Does he in the same way disclose his Jewish identity, known to us from external sources? I can think of only two passages that might have alerted me. Pasternak is speaking of Misha Gordon, aged eleven, the Jewish, de-Judaized friend of Zhivago:

A feeling of care was his ultimate mainspring and was not relieved and ennobled by a sense of security. He knew this hereditary trait in himself. . . . It distressed him. Its presence humiliated him.

For as long as he could remember he had never ceased to wonder why, having arms and legs like everyone else, and a language and way of life common to all, one could be different from the others, liked only by a few and, moreover, loved by no one. He could not understand a situation in which if you were worse than other people you could not make an effort to improve yourself. What did it mean to be a Jew?

This has the flavor of inside perplexity, and one is inclined to hear the exasperation of the Jewish assimilationist in the following (Gordon and Zhivago, young men at the front, have just seen a Cossack tormenting an old Jew, to the huge amusement of the bystanders. Gordon is speaking of the persistence of the Jewish people):

What use is it to anyone, this voluntary martyrdom? Whom does it profit? For what purpose are those innocent old men and women and children, all these subtle, kind, humane people, mocked and beaten up through the centuries? Why didn't the intellectual leaders of the Jewish people ever go beyond *Weltschmertz* and ironical wisdom. Why have they not disbanded this army which keeps on fighting and being massacred nobody knows for what? Why don't they say to them: "Come to your senses, stop. Don't hold on to your identity. Don't stick together, disperse. Be with all the rest. You are the first and best Christians in the world. You are the very thing against which you have been turned by the worst and weakest among you."

Two such statements standing by themselves are not enough; besides, the Jewish subject is tangential to *Dr. Zhivago;* had it been as important as in *Remembrance* something might have come out. In *Ulysses* the Jewish subject is of great importance, and the extended utterances and portrayals of Bloom are wonderfully true to life; but independently of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* we can see that Stephen's is the self-portrait in *Ulysses,* irreconcilable with the Bloom type, and it is Stephen's agonies that must mirror the author's defection from his religious upbringing. Stephen's relation to his past is a suffering one, Bloom's to his a comical one. Bloom does not, like Stephen, wrestle mortally with his family and racial memories; he clowns with them sentimentally and tearfully. It would be unjust to say that the author does not feel for Bloom, but he does not feel for him as one would for oneself. And this is also what must be said of Pasternak and his observations on Jews. I would not have guessed that he was of Jewish birth.

The *Zhivago* criticisms of Communism are for the greatest part based on obsolete values, or else meaningless. The same may be said of the observations on Jews and Judaism. If Misha Gordon believes that the Jews "are the first and best Christians in the world" it is absurd of him to demand the dissolution of so exalted an example, and mean-spirited of him to ask: "What use is it to anyone, this useless martyrdom?" In this same speech Gordon says of the Jews:

Their national idea has forced them, century after century, to be nation and nothing but nation—and they have been chained to this deadening task all through the centuries when all the rest of the world was being delivered from it by a new force which has come out of their own midst. . . .

And Lara says to Zhivago:

Of course it's true that persecution forces them into this disastrous attitude, this shamefaced, self-denying isolation that brings them

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nothing but misfortune. But I think some of it also comes from an inner senility, a historical, centuries-long weariness. . . .

which is preceded by (it is Lara speaking):

It's so strange that these people who once liberated mankind from the yoke of idolatry, and so many of whom now devote themselves to its liberation from injustice, should now be incapable of liberating themselves from their loyalty to an obsolete, antediluvian identity that has lost all meaning, that they should not rise above themselves and dissolve among all the rest whose religion they have founded. . . .

And, going back once more, Misha Gordon says:

What are the nations now in the Christian era? They aren't just nations, but converted, transformed nations, and what matters is this transformation, not loyalty to ancient principles.

How, chained to a deadening task through all the centuries, fallen into an inner senility (Lara's and Gordon's views are much the same, Zhivago tells her—and they are by implication his, more or less) how can the Jews be "the best Christians in the world"? A befuddlement always results when the best in the Christian ideal is juxtaposed with the worst in real Jewish life; here the befuddlement is made quite desperate because the Jews are somehow offered as ideal human examples while exposed as a senile people loyal to an antediluvian identity. The last touch is added when we reflect that, as Lara and Gordon and Zhivago and Pasternak well know, the nations are not "converted, transformed nations"; their nationalism is infinitely more important to them than their Christianity. (There are not a few Jews who assert that the Jews were infected, to their spiritual undoing, by the nationalism of the modern Christian nations, and that they ought to cleanse themselves—by becoming Christians!)

X

The statements just quoted so well typify the less intelligent Christian missionary to the Jews, and they seem to issue so naturally from the speakers, that, with the two exceptions noted, nothing in the book would prompt us to think of the author as a Jew. Pasternak has done a far better job of "assimilation" than Proust; and if I am to guess at the reason on the basis of *Dr. Zhivago,* it is because he is filled with the solvent of a mystical fervor alien to Proust. I find a resemblance between Pasternak and Ezra Pound, the non-Jew, and the former may be as gifted a poet as the latter; in both of them the talent of the poet is accompanied by a stultified view of Jewish and other matters.

We are now *en plein air,* noting the interplay between the books and our acquaintance, such as it is, with the authors as real persons. The reflections which follow are not "simply" literary. Whether just or wide of the mark they are tangential to the interpretation of a book as a book. But they do belong to a proper field of study, the topography and extent of which are not clear. We are concerned in it with the artist and his place in society, with his work and its place in the history of thought; with moral judgments and psychological analyses of books and men as influences. For that matter much of this essay has only an indirect bearing on *Remembrance* and *Dr. Zhivago* as works of art.

From this standpoint two phenomena of world-wide interest link *Remembrance*-Proust with *Dr. Zhivago*-Pasternak, namely, the Dreyfus case and anti-Semitism in Communist Russia. The first of these has a very large place in *Remembrance;* the second is never mentioned in *Dr. Zhivago.*

The bulk of *Dr. Zhivago* is placed in early Communist Russia. The last eight or ten years of Zhivago's life, which is vaguely indicated as having ended around 1930, are disposed of in 39 out of 560 pages. Then follows an epilogue of 16 pages bringing us down, in the closing paragraphs, to 1948 or 1953 ("five or ten years later"—i.e., after a conversation dated 1943), and 37 pages of the poems of Zhivago. From outside sources we gather that most of *Dr. Zhivago* was written long before 1943; the book itself tells us that the finishing touches were added not earlier than 1953. I do not know what revisions Pasternak made in the first parts when the finishing touches were added; but this much all of us know: that by 1953 the infamous record of Communist anti-Semitism had been climaxed by the "case of the poisoning doctors"; those doctors were cleared and released in the spring of that year, shortly after Stalin's death; and long

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

before Pasternak offered his completed and corrected manuscript for publication in its present form—that is, while there was still time for a little revision—it was common knowledge that hundreds of Jewish leaders, novelists, poets, actors, publicists had been killed unjustly. Many were posthumously reinstated in Communist respectability; and queerly enough the accusation had often been "cosmopolitanism," another name for that "transformation" of the nations which Zhivago-Lara-Gordon-Pasternak are so fervid about. This is only part of the story; in its completeness it is something that should have shaken the soul of the mystico-religious Pasternak to its depths. He does not give a sign in *Dr. Zhivago.*

Some remarks by Lara shed a light on this insensibility. She says to Zhivago: "If you do intellectual work of any kind and live in a town as we do, half of your friends are bound to be Jews. Yet in times when there are pogroms, when all these terrible despicable things are done, we don't only feel sorry and indignant and ashamed, we feel wretchedly divided, as if our sympathy were more from the head than from the heart and had an aftertaste of insincerity."

The Dreyfus case as interwoven with *Remembrance* and Proust shows a wholly different design. It is recorded by Proust's biographers that he was very active as a Dreyfusard. In *Remembrance,* Marcel too is a Dreyfusard, with the ostensible objectivity of an intelligent and moral non-Jewish French patriot. The painful emotional reverberations in Proust the man were transferred to Swann. Proust obviously cannot get rid of his Jewish self-awareness. He is far more deeply involved in it than Pasternak, who has risen *audessus de la mêlée.* Proust-Marcel is, in his relationship to his Jewishness, pathological and tragic; in the same relationship Pasternak-Zhivago is adjusted and contemptible.

Even if he were a non-Jew one could not condone in Pasternak his handling of the Jewish issue. He might have omitted it altogether, and that too would have been dishonest when he spreads himself so willingly on the moral defects of the Communists. As it is he is doubly dishonest. His sanctimonious admonitions to the Jews are directed toward their Christianization; his indignation at their maltreatment is confined to the Czaristic period or to anti-Communists; and by his animadversions on their collective "senility" and "self-denying isolation" he makes them unpalatable to Christians and Communists alike.

Proust could neither "repress" the Dreyfus affair and the Jewish question nor "do" them offhandedly. There they were, looming enormously in the life of the France he was depicting. The concealments of Proust-Marcel are personal and transparent, for Proust is an artistic genius, and genius is among other things a compulsion neurosis of honesty in craftsmanship. When the genius is in bondage to his essential theme his compulsion will circumvent or rather ignore any *arrière pensée,* and his exertions will be as honest as those of a man swimming for his life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SETTLING IN ENGLAND

Reflections of a South African Jew

DAN JACOBSON

NEITHER for me nor for my parents was England "Home." My father and mother both came to South Africa directly from Eastern Europe; I was born in Johannesburg and grew up in Kimberley. However, twenty years ago Kimberley was still a very "English" city in many ways: it had its statues of Queen Victoria in public places, its overdecorated double-story houses behind thick hedges, its maiden ladies of eccentric dress and imperious accent, even its retired military gentlemen with sunken, sallow faces and yellow-stained mustaches. The last of these I used to see particularly in the Kimberley Public Library, where I spent much of my time as a boy: even then I thought of the library itself as an "English" kind of building, as indeed it was; it was more like a club than any public library I have seen since, with its smoking room, leather armchairs, verandahs, chess tables, and magazines laid out freely and unbound on the tables. The magazines were almost all English, needless to say, though *Life* and *Time* made their appearance later. But the *Tatler,* the *Sketch,* the *Illustrated London News, Punch* were there long before; and it was these I used to look at when I was not busy with the bound volumes of the *Boys Own Paper* or other books, all English, from the juvenile section. I should add that actually the library was housed in what had once been the residence of one of those German Jewish diamond magnates who had made their fortunes in the early days of Kimberley, and whose companies had long since been gathered by Cecil Rhodes into the De Beers Company. Kimberley was then very much a company town, and the company could still be thought of as belonging to Rhodes, whose bronze figure, on a bronze horse, one had to pass on the way to the city center; and whose ideas of empire still lingered perceptibly in the town.

The character of Kimberley has almost altogether changed since those days, for a number of reasons, which can be summarized by saying that all that was un-English then has become dominant now, and that what was "English" has become even more faded and tenuous than, looking back, I realize it already was. But I have mentioned the "Englishness" of the city as it appeared to me in my boyhood because this may help the reader to understand how it was that in a hot tin-roofed mining town on the edge of the Karroo, I felt myself to be involved very deeply, and very early, with an idea of England. Of course, most of that idea I got out of the books, comics, and magazines I read; but it was the ghostly or vestigial Englishness in the atmosphere of the town that enabled me to relate directly what I read to something of what I saw around me, outside school. In school an Englishness of a more self-conscious and emphatic kind was deliberately encouraged: our caps, our blazers, our games, our prefectships, our codes of morals were all of a pattern Rhodes would have approved of; and the patriotism we were encouraged to feel was far more a patriotism toward England than it was

---

DAN JACOBSON has won wide critical admiration for his novels *The Trap, A Dance in the Sun,* and *The Price of Diamonds;* and, most recently, for the *Zulu and the Zeide,* a collection of his short stories. Born in South Africa in 1929, he finally chose to settle in England. He explains his choice in this article, a contribution to a symposium called *Alienation,* which will be published by MacGibbon and Kee in London, this year. Mr. Jacobson last appeared in our pages with "Zion Revisited" (July 1959).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

toward South Africa. Our headmaster was an Ulster Irishman, and possibly this had something to do with what he wanted to make of us: certainly the outbreak of the war encouraged his loyalist bent to an extraordinary degree, and we were continually being marshaled in the school hall to sing "There'll Always Be an England," while the headmaster stood on the platform and glowered satisfiedly over us. By the end of the war he was dead, and neither the new headmaster nor conditions in South Africa at large permitted displays of this kind of patriotism. But by that time the damage, or the benefit, had been done—to me at least.

But it was the books I read which ultimately had authority over me, and these books were practically all English. The headmaster could only confirm what the books had already told me—namely, that everything I saw in Kimberley which was not recognizably "English" did not properly exist. The veld, the sun, the heat, the black people of the town, even the Afrikaans-speaking whites, my own position as the son of an immigrant Jewish family—these were all unwritten about, without confirmation, without background, without credentials. There was something unreliable, not to say fishy, about them all. We did not live as people should live; we did not live where people should live. It was wrong that summer should have come in December and winter in July; it was wrong that I never saw snow, wrong that our servants were black men and women who could not speak English instead of apple-cheeked wenches and impertinent Cockneys; wrong that we had no "countryside" around the town, only veld; wrong that we had no dells, no streams, no fogs, no thatched cottages, no lords, no ladies, no villages (we had *dorps*, but a *dorp* was not a village); our clothes, our houses, our trees were all wrong.

We lived, nevertheless. We lived without fogs and thatched cottages and lords and ladies and dells and streams; we were hot in the summer and cold in the winter, whatever the month of the year in which they came; we played or fought with the servants, though their skins were of the wrong colour; the veld may not have been "countryside", and may have hidden more snakes and lizards than moles or foxes, but there was a great deal to do in it, all the same; we swam in the Vaal and the Modder Rivers, though they were nothing like the streams in which the heroes of our books splashed and paddled. If the worst came to the worst, we gave names out of our English books to the things we encountered, and were as happy with them as we would have been had they been the real names of the real things. There was, for instance, a vicious hard little thorn that grew in a net on the ground, and these thorns we called "thistles"; what we called "conkers," I was to find out later, were not conkers at all; what the books from England told us "to do on a rainy day" we did on days when it was too hot to go out of the house. In the long battle between our books and the country around us, the books could never make us doubt the evidence of our eyes, could never make us feel any the less intensely what we felt. But this does not mean that the books ever really lost ground either: they retained their ultimate authority. The thing was to evade their authority, or to use it for our own ends; but however much it was evaded or used, it could not be denied. The puzzlement, the uneasiness remained: I was never able to feel that a country bare of notation, of comment, of description, was anything but half a country. And of course I was perfectly correct. South Africa is but half a country, if it is even that; and I was correct too in supposing that England, being filled with notation and description, is a country that somehow altogether fills its own area, physically and in the mind.

I have spoken so far of the "authority" of school and the written word; but it was not these only which the idea of England had over me. There was also an authority of a different and even more imposing kind. The outbreak of the Second World War meant that there was no longer any casual coming and going of civilians between England

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and South Africa for the duration; and if this served to make England physically even more remote, the war added greatly to the prestige the country had for me. And it did this for a reason which I felt at least as intensely as any of those offered by the headmaster in his orations at assembly. The reason was that I was a Jew.

In the abstract it might appear that my Jewishness and the Eastern European background of my parents should have made the question of any involvement with England of less consequence to me, rather than more. But it did not do so; not at all. When the war broke out I was about ten years old; barely a year later the Battle of Britain took place; and at the age of ten or eleven I knew perfectly well that Britain was fighting a force which threatened me personally, because I was a Jew; and there were enough books and papers in the house, and enough anti-Jewry abroad in South Africa, for me to have formulated a pretty precise (as I thought) and certainly horrific idea of the nature of the threat. Between myself, my family and this threat, there was one country only, for a long time, and that country was Great Britain. Consciously and conscientiously I was grateful to England, and my gratitude was as immediate to me as my fear of the intrusion and murder which England was saving me from. And from my parents I understood that it was not an accident that it should have been England which was protecting us; I believed that England was doing it because, in both senses of the phrase, she "stood for" certain values which would always bring her into opposition against a force like Nazism.

That was the one way in which my being Jewish involved me further with the idea of England; the other was more problematical, though not less decisive. My father was (and still is) a passionate Zionist; and the time I am speaking of, during the war, what happened in Palestine happened at the dictates of Great Britain. My father's children soon came to share his views that British policy in Palestine was foolish, hypocritical, and ruinous, and our resentment was all the greater for the admiration we otherwise had for England. But the point to be made here is that once again, and again as Jews, we felt ourselves to be deeply involved with Great Britain. In two of the greatest public issues of my childhood—the war against Germany and the Zionist struggle—it was to England that we had to turn, it was from England that the answers would come.

Thus the authority of the word, and the authority of decision in great events, seemed to me as a boy to be invested in England, always in England. If I had a central image or idea of England, it was that of England as power.

Again, I was right. England is a power—a power in the world of fact, and an even greater power in the world of the imagination. It is obviously not the power it once was; but there seems to me to be a profound vulgarity in supposing that because England's power in the world is less than before, one should therefore not speak of it at all. There is an accumulation of power in England—political, social, intellectual, moral—which has not yet been dissipated, and can yet be added to, if the will to do so is there.

Whether or not the will is there is another question. It does not look like it at the moment—that much must be admitted. The best of the younger English nowadays seem anxious to restrict themselves to a deliberate provincialism of thought, to make every statement of theirs a denial of power. The worst find their gratification in either abusing their country, or in the complementary exercises of such organizations as the League of Empire Loyalists: both abuse and "glorification" being obvious expressions of a personal and social sickness, and neither of them being as new as the sick seem to imagine. But the present nullity of intellectual life in England may well be no more than a mood, a phase; for there is no fatal necessity for the power of England to run into the sand; there is no "historical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inevitability" about it; and young men in Australia and Canada and South Africa, and in India and the West Indies too, should still be able to turn England for refreshment and confirmation, in recognition and gratitude, if only the English have the will to measure themselves with neither shame nor braggadocio by what they were in the past. English society is in many ways a healthy and capable one; England is still a country in which people do not have to be coerced into relationship with one another, but know their relationship with an unreflective and unspoken immediacy.

It is true that the major preoccupation of the English today seems to be with the divisions and discriminations of their own class system; and this emphasis on class is usually taken to be a sign of the ill health of the society. But the fascination of English life is its paradoxical and involuted nature; and what is most pleasant and admirable about the English has always been intimately bound up with what is much less pleasant about them. Thus, the English respect for privacy has its obverse face in English unfriendliness; English gentleness is allied to English lack of candor; the English sense of cohesion is linked closely with the distrust and distaste most Englishmen feel towards foreigners; the social charm of many Englishmen is dependent to a large degree on their fear of seriousness. And, in the same way, the frustrations, the suffocations, of the English class system arise in part from the inter-responsiveness of English society, the sense of "family" that the English have towards one another. And the more like the members of a family they are, the more everyone measures himself against everyone else, secretly, finely, in the absorbed, minute, discriminating, English way. For myself—with my background and my accent—I feel myself to be so far out of the class system that it does not worry me in personal terms at all. I am an odd fish, a stranger, a South African, a Jew; I don't belong within it.

Which means that I don't belong within English society. Does this worry me? The answer is no: I did not come to England in order to belong; and when I came here to settle I knew I never could—not in any way which an Englishman would think of as "belonging." I first visited England about ten years ago, and lived here then for about a year: at that time the country, and my being in it, enraptured me: simply by living in London I felt that I had in some way or other "made" it. I had made it when I saw the Tower of London or Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, or a sign on a station bench saying "Cambridge"; I had made it when I first heard the call of a cuckoo, the yell of a coster, a landlord calling time; I can remember my own silly delight and incredulity when I was first stung by a nettle. I felt, I suppose, what every provincial or colonial feels when he comes for the first time to the center of things; and I felt too an unexpected gratitude both to the circumstances in my life which had made it possible for me to come to the center, and to the center itself for being as metropolitan, as orderly, rich, and various as it was. For me then there was richness in almost everything I saw: there was richness in the very decrepitude of London, as it was in those days, when there was so little repainting and even less rebuilding; there was richness in the changing light under the clouds, in the faces and voices of people, in the bomb sites, even in the ration books which were still being issued then, in place-names and clothes, in fog, in rain, in snow, in streets and squares and railway stations. How much of the richness I enjoyed was "literary," or at least a matter of association, and how much was really "there" seems to me a meaningless question; because presence and association were single in their fullness. England was rich, is rich; and in comparison South Africa could not but seem tawdry and thin and blank. Its buildings cast no shadow on the mind; its sounds carried

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

within them no resonance; and there were so many fewer buildings, so many fewer sounds, so many fewer people in South Africa, and had been fewer, for hundreds upon hundreds of years.

Yet it was not during this enraptured visit (when I felt patriotic to a degree that should have gratified the shade of my late headmaster)—it was not during this visit that I decided I wanted to live in England. After a year I went back to South Africa, and lived there again for several years, and when I returned to England—this time with the intention of settling—I did not expect to be enraptured again; and was not. I came back to England for many reasons; some of them entirely private, others capable of being expanded into generalities—all of them, it seems to me now, evasive to a degree. I can say at least that I truly preferred to live in England; and still do: over-all, there is no doubt in my mind that it is worthwhile putting up with whatever is uncomfortable in England, in order to enjoy the immense benefit of the privacy of life in England, the absence of bullying, the absence of tension, particularly after living in a country like South Africa. But it would be less than honest for me to pretend that the rapture and pride I had felt in first being in England had not played its part in my settling here, though I find this a little embarrassing to admit now, when I feel neither sentiment. What I chiefly feel toward England is gratitude: gratitude for its peace, its order, even its indifference. And I am grateful too that as a British subject I have been able to come and live here, assuming immediately all the rights and obligations of citizenship and suffering none of the disabilities of being an alien.

To what extent my choice of England as a residence arose out of my choice of profession I cannot say. On the one hand it is unquestionably easier "to be a writer" in England than it is in South Africa; and as a writer I am of course attracted to the place where my books are published and where they are most read. On the other hand, none of my South African friends in England are themselves writers, and yet they too are settled here; so I can only assume that I too might well have come to England anyway, even if I had followed a different vocation.

In any event, once we have made our decisions, our reasons for coming to them become very swiftly irrelevant, boring to think about; though as with all other decisions, so with this one I have had regrets, afterthoughts, nostalgias, resentments against the decisiveness of the decision itself. I am often homesick for South Africa; and I have my full share of the resentment too of the colonial towards the things which he most respects in the older country. Indeed, in writing this piece I have felt throughout my own reluctance to say outright how much there is in England that I admire. Why should I, I have felt ungraciously, when the English think so much of themselves already?

I AM, I suppose, "alienated," as the word is commonly used, but I do not see that this is a matter for regret or self-pity. In the first place, I am used to it. What I have tried to describe of my boyhood in Kimberley is a cultural unease which can fairly be called alienation. And this cultural alienation is not by any means all which in South Africa divides anyone living there from the country around him, from the people around him, from himself. If there is one thing which everybody knows about South Africa, it is that it's a miserable country to live in, for all its wealth and scenic splendor; and for once everybody is right. But what people do not usually realize it that this misery is only rarely dramatic and poignant: usually it is dull and dragging and wearisome, a sickness of discord and disaffection, of division and self-division, which has neither crisis nor abatement. Of course, when one is living there one is not always conscious of the misery of the country; but even this unconsciousness can be thought of as a feature of the sickness, perhaps its most dismaying feature. After such an experience it can come as a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

positive relief to be an outsider to a society which exists quite independently of any imaginative or compassionate effort on his own part. I know many South Africans who would not agree with this: they would rather be whirling in a chaos on equal terms with everyone else than looking as an outsider at an order which others have arranged and are enjoying. I respect such South Africans; but I am not one of them.

Then, in talking of "alienation" I suppose it is almost expected of me to say that if I am alienated so is everybody else in the modern world. The trouble is that this is something I do not altogether believe. It is true that nowadays nobody can know who he is, and what he is, without taking thought on the subject; but still, as people and societies go in the modern world, it seems to me that an Englishman can still have the right to feel himself conspicuously "unalienated" in comparison with someone like myself. There is a real continuity in English life still, and what is enduring and distinctive in this life has not by any means come to its end: if this were not true I would not be as glad as I am to live, as an outsider, in England.

Yet there is sufficient truth in the statement "We are all alienated" for me to feel that my isolation is nothing extraordinary. What we are all alienated from, equally, is our own future: we do not know what is going to become of us, we cannot imagine the world our grandchildren will be living in. In the face of this immense ignorance and dubiety, the present differences between us are marginal. (This does not mean that we should try to ignore the differences: on the contrary, it is in the margins that we live most interestingly.) And what is certainly true of us all today is that if we manage to live unhungry and unmolested in our own homes, we have nothing very much to complain about, whoever we are and wherever we may happen to live.

And to turn from this back to England in particular, there is one more point to be made. Strangers, foreigners, exiles, refugees, have been coming to England for many years; and in their work and their living here they have affected the quality of English life very deeply. My own expectation is that people from the dominions and colonies will continue to come to England; and I feel that from the exchange both England and the countries outside must benefit. After three hundred years of independence and almost as many of national greatness, the Americans are still obsessed with their relationship to Europe: why then should it be thought surprising that every week a fresh boatload of South Africans or Australians arrives to look at the country which has given them so much in their own lives? Being here they soon realize how much in their lives has *not* been made in England; but whether they stay or go back to their home countries, their self-awareness cannot but be sharpened by their experience of England. And as for the English—well, it does them no harm to be reminded continually that they cannot throw off their past abroad any more easily than they can throw off their past at home. If England helped to make us, can we now help, however indirectly and in however small a way, to make England?

I would like to believe that we can, though I know the English are unlikely to take kindly the suggestion. And I know too that our fellow countrymen over the seas wouldn't like the sound of it either. But the curious thing is that being in England I know better, in a sense, than I ever did before what it is to be a South African, what it is to be a Jew. It is just one more way of trying to be human. And I have come to England because so many men have succeeded here, over so many hundreds of years, in the same attempt.

That is the true secret of the power of England.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

UNEASY BALANCE OF DE GAULLE'S REPUBLIC

Left, Right, and Underground

RAY ALAN

A LITTLE over a year ago in the outskirts of a small southern French town I stopped my car beside a group of four men and a woman to ask a direction. It was a few minutes after ten in the evening. At once fists were clenched, cudgels appeared, and lights were flashed into the car. When they saw I was alone and the car foreign, they relaxed. Apologetically, they told me they were Communists awaiting a delivery of anti-Gaullist leaflets which they intended to spend the rest of the night distributing. They had thought the car contained a band of fascist provocateurs. (A few weeks earlier a clash between Communists and right-wing bill-stickers in Toulouse had ended in a fatal shooting.) The woman and her husband were in their late fifties, grandparents, and owned a comfortable business. "This is the anti-fascist struggle of the 30's all over again," they said. "Within a year France will be a police state, but at least we'll have our self-respect: we'll be able to answer our grandchildren's questions without blushing—which is more than Guy Mollet can say."

Some French Communists do come near to blushing, nevertheless, when one talks politics with them today: for, in October 1959 (after a meeting with Soviet theoreticians in East Germany), their party boss Maurice Thorez suddenly discovered unsuspected merits in Charles de Gaulle, and the party press switched its fire to the "monopolies and trusts operating in de Gaulle's shadow." The General had just offered the Algerians self-determination, and subsequently he invited Nikita Khrushchev to France, approved an agreement with the Soviet government for a direct Paris-Moscow railroad link, and won more Communist cheers by proclaiming his mistrust of the "Anglosaxon" nuclear strategists (capable either of devastating Europe or of cynically agreeing with the Russians to "partition" the world) and declaring that "it is the people of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, who will decide the future of the world." In the third volume of his memoirs, published in November, he paid a warmer tribute to Maurice Thorez than to any leader of the right or center. Hitherto dejected *Gaullistes de gauche* began dropping hints that a Franco-Soviet friendship pact is on the diplomatic agenda and that de Gaulle is preparing to lean on the left in anticipation of a showdown with the *ultras* over Algeria. A fellow-traveling editor declared that, if de Gaulle did pick a fight with the *ultras,* leftists would be on his side of the barricades.

As the left has reconciled itself to de Gaulle, the ardor of many of his right-wing supporters has cooled. His critics now include his one time foreign minister Georges Bidault, rabble-rouser Pierre Lagaillarde (pace-setter of the Algiers riot of May 13, 1958), veteran plotters Salvatore Biaggi and Leon Delbecque (who gave the Algiers uprising its Gaullist orientation), Pascal Arrighi (coordinator of the Algiers-organized Corsican coup of 1958), Marshal Alfonse Juin, General Lionel Chassin (who was to have led a "march on Paris" had the Fourth Republic refused to capitulate to de Gaulle), General Maxime Weygand,

---

RAY ALAN, a British journalist now residing in France, contributed two articles on recent French politics: "The Fourth Republic Abdicates" (July 1958) and "Can de Gaulle Stop the Gaullists?" (January 1959). He also reviewed *Les 13 Complots du 13 Mai,* by Merry and Serge Bromberger, in the July 1959 issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Colonel "Leathernose" Thomazo and the more militant ex-servicemen's leaders, as well as the usual fascists, corporativists, and nostalgic imperialists. But de Gaulle's ministerial team has clung together. The present government's stability is, indeed, its main justification in the eyes of a majority of Frenchmen who are divided on Algeria and upset by rising prices but still appalled by the memory of the twenty governmental crises (in eleven years) of the Fourth Republic.

Anglo-American observers, less easily impressed than the French by stability for stability's sake, would cite as the Gaullist regime's principal achievements its positive approach to the over-all problem of decolonization (the danger, vivid up to eighteen months ago, that Paris would repeat its Indo-Chinese and Algerian follies in Madagascar and West Africa has now receded), and M. Antoine Pinay's successful treatment of the country's economic disorders. The budget deficit has been kept within manageable bounds, gold and dollar reserves have grown, a healthy export-import balance has been established, the franc has been devalued to a realistic rate, trade has been liberalized, and inflationary subsidies and pork-barrel handouts have been reduced. Government planners say industrial investment will increase by 7.5 per cent and industrial output by 5.5 per cent in 1960, though they omit to point out that the foundations of this progress were laid during the last few years of the Fourth Republic.

But M. Pinay's orthodox right-wing views on finance are a dubious political asset in socially stratified France, where the cleavage between working class and bourgeoisie is as deep as in pre-war Britain. While cutting taxes on companies, practically abolishing those on inherited property, and allowing the bourgeoisie to tie its savings to the value of gold, he has increased the tax burden borne by wage earners. The French consumer was already, under the Fourth Republic, the most heavily taxed in Western Europe, and in the last year devaluation and the suppression of certain subsidies have reduced the purchasing power of the average working-class family by 10 per cent (left-wing economists say 12 per cent). House-building for private ownership is subsidized by the government, however opulent the owner may be, but insufficient low-rental housing is going up even to keep pace with working-class marriage and birth rates, let alone make large-scale slum clearance possible: in four French towns out of five, drains, flushable toilets, and bathrooms are still rather remote luxuries for the majority of wage earners. For the housewife whose first daily chore is to dispose of the contents of her family's ironically named *seau hygiénique,* government radio propaganda about *grandeur,* nuclear armaments, and France's mission in Africa has a mocking ring.

The boulevarding correspondents who used to write about the prosperity of Franco's Madrid, and before that of Farouk's Cairo, are presently dazzled by the gloss of Paris, and it is true that sales of cars, TV sets, and building sites are booming; but in the narrow leprous streets beyond the boulevards there is hardship and discontent, and but for the three-way Communist-Socialist-Catholic split in the labor unions —for which de Gaulle can be grateful to the politicians of the Fourth Republic— industrial unrest would be stealing headlines from Algeria.

WHETHER he knows it or not, Khrushchev will be conferring two diplomas on Charles de Gaulle: the diploma of Artisan of Peace and Détente, for left-wing contemplation, and that of Diplomatic Grandeur for the admiration of the French right. The right, while anti-Communist in internal policies, is no more anti-Soviet than anti-American in its approach to international affairs. (When Khrushchev referred last November to the "historic link" between France and Algeria right-wingers rejoiced that "the Russians wish us to stay in North Africa to block American penetration there.") The right wants de Gaulle to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

use the threat of a Franco-Soviet rapprochement to lever nuclear and strategic concessions out of Washington, failing which he should negotiate a pact with Khrushchev that, in the words of a Gaullist leader at Bordeaux, "would establish France's primacy in Western Europe and transform the diplomatic scene."

But before de Gaulle can assert himself positively on the international scene—before he can move toward the creation of that neutralist Eurafrican bloc both left and right here would like to see—he must extricate France from her Algerian embarrassment. Naturally, he does not want to lose Algeria: its loss would almost certainly bring the Fifth Republic to as inglorious an end as the Fourth, and the wheels of the Eurafrican complex are to be lubricated with Algerian oil. He hopes to exorcise the demon of Algerian nationalism by holding a referendum to decide the country's future four years after the cessation of military operations. As an inducement to the FLN (National Liberation Front) to agree to a ceasefire he has informed its leaders that they will be allowed to resume political activities in Algeria. He is confident that by stepping up industrial development and expenditure on public works, housing, and education, and by conducting a vigorous propaganda drive during the four decisive years—the radio will continue to be a government monopoly—his representatives in Algiers will succeed in obtaining a majority favorable to some form of federal association with France.

General de Gaulle himself probably wants a free vote (though not necessarily a free campaign: he has never dissociated himself from the methods used to sway the voting in the 1958 referendum and election, and it is hard to imagine him authorizing the FLN to broadcast or publish a newspaper). But the men who brought him to power are less ambiguous. General Jacques Massu and other officers have shrugged off self-determination as "a formula necessary for foreign consumption." Prime Minister Michel Debré says: "What we must do is take all necessary measures to insure that the choice of secession is ruled out." General Paul Ely has asserted that "there can be no question of contemplating a withdrawal of the French army from Algeria in any humanly forseeable future." De Gaulle's personal representative in Algeria, M. Paul Delouvrier, head of the administration there, has adopted the settlers' slogan—avoided by the general—*"Algérie française";* and the *Cinquième bureau* (psychological warfare) of the army is still plastering walls with *Algérie française* posters. General Fernand Gambiez has assured Algerian *ultras* that the army's aim is still to keep Algeria French.

De Gaulle has withdrawn his original demand for an FLN surrender and he has allowed the "liberal" section of his entourage to assure the French left and the Tunisian and Moroccan governments that FLN emissaries will be received in Paris with dignity and that a ceasefire will not be exploited by the French authorities as amounting to a rebel surrender; but he has also allowed MM. Debré and Delouvrier and senior army officers to stress that in the government's view the FLN *would* be surrendering and acknowledging "the victory of French arms" if it agreed to a ceasefire (*"De Gaulle lui-même me l'a dit,"* says M. Delouvrier: "De Gaulle himself told me so").

Thus, despite the clarity of General de Gaulle's statements of September 16 and November 10, a powder trail of equivocation is being laid which seems bound to touch off a fresh explosion within the next four or five years: in France if right-wing illusions are brusquely shattered, in North Africa if the Algerians are given cause to suspect that they are being "conditioned" for another prefabricated referendum. M. Debré and Jacques Soustelle (Minister for the Sahara) would already have plotted the downfall of any other leader proposing so perilous a policy: they and their friends brought down Premiers Bourgès-Maunoury, Gaillard, and Pflimlin, and organized a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vicious campaign against Mendès-France, for far less. The very success of their conspiracy in the spring of 1958, which depended for its ratification on the genuine popularity of the man they brought to power, has to some extent made them de Gaulle's prisoners; and Debré cut loose from the more impulsive right-wing extremists last October on discovering that some of them were now plotting against himself. But the Premier's own past involvements and indiscretions have left a vulnerable hostage in the extremists' hands*; and Soustelle is still the acknowledged leader of the right-wing diehards of the Union for the New Republic, the biggest party in the National Assembly.

THE UNR, Gaullist in ritual but Soustellist in spirit, has institutionalized the equivocation on which the regime is based. It has few rank-and-file members, no national organization at the grass-roots level, and no program. Its deputies owe their election to Soustelle's success in putting over the slogan "To vote UNR is to vote de Gaulle." They are committed to only one article of faith, but an all-embracing one: fidelity to de Gaulle. Recruited on the classical right, most of them deplore, privately, the offer of self-determination to Algeria. But they know that if de Gaulle sent them packing and ordered fresh elections they would stand little chance of reelection. They are obliged therefore to accept the party leadership de Gaulle recommends, and to butter their speeches with flattery of de Gaulle, while hoping that Soustelle, burrowing mole-like within the administration, will somehow redress the situation.

The lobbies of the recent UNR congress (its first) at Bordeaux resounded with rebellious talk. The party leadership was said to have allowed "loyalist" branch organizers in the Paris region to inflate their membership figures by 300 per cent and accredit a disproportionate number of delegates so as to swamp the Soustellists from the provinces and Algeria; and several deputies alleged that ballot boxes had been tampered with to avoid the election of party officials unacceptable to de Gaulle. But inside the congress hall, whenever (as *Le Monde* put it) the brouhaha became excessive and the leadership found itself in a tight corner, it was generally sufficient for loyalists to chant *"Vive de Gaulle"* to bring the dissidents to heel.

The average UNR deputy's fear of facing the electorate without de Gaulle's endorsement frees the General from the sniping which brought down Bourgès-Maunoury and so many others, and even permits him to conscript the leading snipers in his service. But he himself is circumscribed by his dependence on the UNR. Elections would register a swing to the left—one voter in four would again, almost certainly, vote Communist—and, although parliament now has little power, a left-inclined parliament, backed by the unions, could not be disregarded as lightly as de Gaulle disregards the present one. He must also consider the army, which has been conditioned to regard everyone to the left of the UNR as a potential traitor. Its leaders understand de Gaulle's need to toss occasional scraps of comfort to the left in the interests of industrial peace, and like the idea of a diplomatic rapprochement with the Soviet Union that would "strengthen" France

* *Vide* his constant concern to play down the significance, and thereby reduce the efficacy, of de Gaulle's Algerian initiatives, and his handling of the Pesquet scandal in November. Pesquet, a former right-wing deputy, was employed by the organizers of the 1957 bazooka attack on General Salan to lure Senator Mitterand into a phony ambush which he would later accuse Mitterand of having organized with the aim of winning cheap kudos. The plotters wished to discredit Mitterand because, as *Garde des Sceaux,* he had had access to the now suppressed official file on the bazooka affair and, as a leftist, he might one day be tempted to publish what he knew. Premier Debré and his Minister of Justice withheld from the magistrate examining Pesquet the information that Pesquet had earlier tried to organize a similar coup against a former Radical minister, M. Bourgès-Maunoury. Pesquet was finally arrested on a charge of setting off a bomb in the parliament building in 1958, a lone wolf exploit from which no trail led to the bazooka plotters—with whom Debré had been closely connected.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vis-à-vis the United States; but they would consider any leftward shift of the center of gravity of France's internal politics a betrayal of the 1958 coup. De Gaulle must therefore keep the UNR disciplined without making his discipline so harsh as to split the party, drive the Soustellists into alliance with the wilder men on the extreme right, and precipitate a general election; and he must continue humoring and flattering the army—and lavishing credits on it—while, very gently, prising loose its somewhat proprietary grip on Algeria.

My personal view is that unless the Algerian situation gets out of hand he will retain both the loyalty of the army and the nominal fealty of Soustelle—who has his eyes on the succession to de Gaulle and requires a broader political base than the right-wing extremists can provide. But a great many thoughtful Frenchmen disagree, fearing that as the fateful date for Algerian self-determination approaches many of the government's supporters—military and civil—will have second thoughts. Significantly or not, the problem of de Gaulle's succession is now being raised in public for the first time, though discussion of it is generally avoided. Maurice Duverger concluded a front page article in the cautious conformist *Monde* on November 21: "Who will fill the bottomless void of the new regime on the disappearance of the *Président-Soleil,* from whom all authority proceeds and on whom all depends?" The same week the general secretary of the docile Catholic-conservative MRP urged the government to solidify the regime by giving more power to parliament: "otherwise everything the government achieves will be insecure, dependent on the survival of one man, and destined to disappear with him."

In short, thanks to de Gaulle, the French have satisfied their yearning for a stable government—but at the price of landing themselves with an extraordinarily precarious regime.

"If only that were the whole price," said a French journalist with whom I discussed this point. "We've lost the habit of looking ahead more than a few months at a time in politics, so a precarious regime wouldn't normally worry me. But there's only one kind of regime can succeed the present one. The nicely stage-managed emotionalism of de Gaulle's provincial tours, with all their attendant flag-waving and nationalist symbolism, the conditioning the army is receiving, and such things as the new stress in schools on national songs and the tone of the press and radio—all that fits into a familiar pattern. The RTF [Radiodiffusion-Television française—state radio and TV] has got so bad one must listen to Switzerland, Radio Tunis, or the BBC's short-wave French program for a civilized news service. The nationalistic hysteria of some RTF commentators is something that hasn't been heard in Western Europe, outside Spain, since 1945."

NATIONALISM is, of course, one of the most venerable skeletons in the closet of French republicanism. The beneficiaries of the profoundly conservative society which emerged from the Revolution exploited it to fill the moral gap left by the erosion of traditional values and sanctions, to help preserve national unity menaced by royalist- and Catholic-inspired regionalism, and to help the lower orders forget their claim to a share of the fruits of the new regime. It acquired respectability among Catholic thinkers to whom the idea that nations, like species, are divinely ordained and immutable was more congenial than evolutionary theories. It was dragged across the political arena time and again to head off reformist movements or divert attention from scandals.

But, in the long run, it is an unsettling influence. Normally intelligent folk who are told repeatedly, from primary school up, that they are "inherently superior to all other nations" (variants of this phrase recur frequently in books, periodicals, and speeches) are apt, ultimately, to ask why so many of the inferior nations manage their affairs more competently and more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

democratically, and possess a more responsible press, better social conditions, and such comforts as habeas corpus. Why does France fail where even tiny New Zealand succeeds? If our cultural superiority is so marked, how come the British have so many more public libraries and why are three-quarters of our population incapable of writing correct French? In reply, the myth-mongers give the nationalist screw another turn: it is all the fault of a tentacular monster named the Anti-France, which the more febrile Catholic publicists identify as the twin brother of the anti-Christ, and which holds in thrall such journals as *L'Express* and *Le Monde* and such leaders as Pierre Mendès-France. The reader should not smile. The Anti-France is a reality, a scaly green-blooded factor in the mental universe of—on his own proud confession—no less a dignitary than the present Prime Minister, M. Debré.

The defeats of 1940, 1941 (Syria), and 1954 (Dien-Bien-Phu), the memory that most of its officers backed the wrong horse in 1940–43, and "humiliations" in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, have riddled the French army with the kind of complexes fascism feeds on. (The atmosphere in military and right-wing circles in 1957–58 was uncannily like that in Damascus and Cairo after Israel's defeat of the Arab League.) Similar complexes in civilian breasts have taken a specifically anti-"Anglosaxon" turn. One important section of the bourgeoisie has never forgiven the British for continuing the war in 1940 and thus wrecking the "divine surprise"; another, including many Gaullists, has never reconciled itself to the fact that France's liberation and postwar rehabilitation should have depended in so "humiliating" a measure on the unmilitary, heretical "Anglosaxons."

A typical history book used in primary schools recounts General de Gaulle's wartime exploit without even mentioning that Britain, too, was at war with Germany. An RTF commentator referred a few months ago to de Gaulle and Churchill as "the men on whom the destiny of the free world depended" during the war years. A group of lycée students, asked what their reading had taught them about France's wartime allies, were unanimous that Russia had saved Western Europe: the "Anglosaxons" concentrated on bombing industrial areas in the occupied countries so as to wipe out postwar competition. Eighty per cent of the Frenchmen with whom I have discussed postwar U. S. aid have either dismissed it as insignificant or said that the Americans "got back more than they gave" (in the form of commercial advantages, concessions, and bases).

Furthermore, both the French press and radio have repeatedly stressed that France's aid to other countries surpasses America's, and General de Gaulle has cried: "We owe nothing to anyone!" What I saw of the "good-offices" mission of Messrs. Robert Murphy and Harold Beeley after the French army's bombardment of Sakyet gave me the impression that they genuinely desired to reconcile France and Tunisia and spare France condemnation by the Security Council: most French papers presented them as scheming to oust France from North Africa, and *bons offices* is still a dirty phrase in French.

General de Gaulle's contributions to nationalist lore sound more outlandish in modern English than in his rather precious, slightly archaic, not infrequently woolly French, and are mild stuff by comparison with the French public's normal intake of emotional toxins: they will do no lasting harm. André Malraux, Minister for Cultural Affairs, seems content to give an articulate take-off of Major Salah Salem. But Premier Debré clearly believes that just as nationalist tub-thumping got him to power, nationalist chest-thumping will keep him there. Criticized for seizing liberal weeklies, he cries: "Name me any other country which permits an opposition press to appear as we do!" When his education budget is termed inadequate he declares: "No other country does as much for education as France!" Accused by his former die-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hard pals of deserting the *Algérie française* campaign, he attacks the perfidy of France's allies. And day after day the state radio, TV, and news-agency monopolies keep up the "conditioning" that is carrying France steadily further from democratic health and vigor and nearer the kind of setup M. Soustelle and the *Cinquième bureau* of the army would apparently like to see.

It was Soustelle who got the "conditioning" process under way in the fall of 1958, having fired several RTF officials suspected of undue loyalty to liberal republicanism. Directives now instruct senior editors how to handle the main news stories. Their general aim is to whip up nationalistic fervor, deflate domestic critics of the government (who may be subjected to severe attack by official RTF commentators but are given no air time to reply), and discredit liberal institutions of the "Anglosaxon" type. No serious criticism of the government's handling of foreign affairs, Algeria, or defense must be reported on radio and TV, and disagreeable news which might reflect on the government must not only be played down but, if possible, balanced by a comment pointing out that conditions in the same sphere in other countries are worse than in France.

Thus, an apparent miscarriage of justice in the United States, a nitwitted debate in the House of Lords, and racial discrimination in the Deep South will be reported at length while news items indicative of the efficient working of Anglo-American democracy are suppressed or truncated. During the British elections, AFP (Agence France-Presse) coverage for the provincial press played down the political issues and concentrated on the "strong chances of success" of Sinn Fein candidates (in Northern Ireland!) who would not, however, AFP stressed, be allowed to occupy their seats in parliament. When, six months ago, the number of unemployed in Britain dropped from about 600,000 to 480,000, the RTF reported that it had risen to 800,000: the *raison d'être* of this item became clear when, a little later, a commentator tried to demonstrate that in France there were only 25,000 unemployed and not 400,000, as the opposition claimed.

M. Roger Frey, Minister of Information, has announced his intention of establishing an "order of journalists" (an institution deriving from fascist Italy) whose purpose would be to tighten his control of the press. But most of the press is already dependent on the official AFP for the bulk of its foreign news and diplomatic comment, and so contagious is the "conditioning" campaign that even normally liberal papers are joining in.

In 1958, under the Fourth Republic, *Le Monde* stressed the power and effectiveness of the opposition within the British parliamentary system; in November 1959, under the Fifth, it reported that the opposition in the House of Commons has no more power than that in the present French Assembly. The *Canard Enchaîné,* on which a majority of French schoolteachers depend for their understanding of current affairs, is nominally liberal, anti-conformist, and critical of the Gaullist regime (its explanation of the birth of the Fifth Republic was that the May 13 riot in Algiers and de Gaulle's return to power were organized by British petroleum interests to steal a march on their American rivals), but in the last year it has taken to competing with the *ultra* press in the fabrication of crudely xenophobic falsehoods.

Day after day, week after week, the steady drip of poison, prejudice, and illusion continues; and more and more Frenchmen are led to believe in the existence of a vast international conspiracy against their nation. It is now fashionable to speak of *l'Anti-France* in gatherings that scoffed at the notion two years ago. The Abbé Carteron, a Lyons priest famous—in some circles infamous—for his welfare work among the French and North African poor, has noted the upsurge of "chauvinism and racism" among the workers of his diocese, for which he lays most of the blame on the daily press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At present the Algerian war provides a focus and an outlet for this feeling. But what will happen when the Algerian war is over? The liberal Catholic review *Esprit* warns: "Then, inexorably, anti-Semitism will break out. The Jews are the only people who are not expecting it."*

Esprit urges the republicans who resigned themselves to acceptance of Gaullist rule as the price of peace in Algeria to think again about the bargain they struck. Not only is Algeria still a problem but de Gaulle's method of government is increasingly dependent on "authoritarianism and the resignation of the public will. . . . His regime of secrecy and surprise confounds and chloroforms public opinion." The French are being conditioned to abandon all intelligent concern for public affairs, to adopt the attitude: "The General knows best." The political salute of the Fifth Republic is the shrug. The RTF and the press worked overtime on the American TV scandal, but most French journalists would admit in private that similar revelations here would not have aroused one-tenth of the uproar. In the course of just six weeks, in the fall of 1959, the French public learned that thousands were starving in army "regroupment camps" for Algerian Moslem civilians; that a parachutist captain had tortured and strangled a leftist professor at a military interrogation center; that no action had been taken against the murderer and the senior officers who covered him; that secret police units exist in Algeria specialized in the use of methods of interrogation beside which (in the words of *La Croix*) "the parachutists' 'electrical torture' appears like a childish game"; that in the attack on Mitterand the government was more eager to discredit Mitterand than to inculpate Pesquet; and that a conversation between MM. Soustelle and Delbecque had been reported to the police in the course of which one allegedly said to the other: "Now that Baylet† is dead the next most important one to get rid of is Mitterand. . . ." Not one of these revelations raised more than a few ripples of comment outside professional political circles and newspaper offices.

ON THE other hand, there are in the French nation vast reserves of common sense and fundamental decency that not all the Debrés, Soustelles, and parachutist colonels on both sides of the Mediterranean will ever be able to drain dry. Hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen are deliberately limiting their intake of RTF propaganda to a minimum. Private conversation rarely reflects the nationalism and xenophobia of the radio and press. The files of Catholic and Protestant organizations are thick with letters from chaplains, pastors, and priests reporting resistance to "conditioning" in the army, especially among conscripts.** A vigorous new middle class is taking shape, centered on the cadres of the expanding modernized sector of French industry (private and nationalized) who are on the whole impatient of the old nationalist and militarist dogmas, inclined toward economic liberalism and European in outlook. The democratic political parties still appear somnolent and self-righteous, but (thanks to de Gaulle) they are being given

* Jewish organizations have protested against the inclusion in the latest edition of the Petit Larousse dictionary of three anti-Jewish epithets—justified the publishers say, by their increased frequency in the language. (They were not included in pre-war editions.) The biographical section of this same edition overlooks the fact that Dreyfus was rehabilitated, contains rather blithe notes on Hitler, Himmler, and other Nazi leaders (who "preferred death to defeat"), and includes an anti-Jewish gibe in its entry on Léon Blum: this last impertinence is to be omitted from future printings as a result of representations by ex-President Vincent Auriol and other former colleagues of Blum's.

† M. Jean Baylet was the owner and editor of *La Dépêche du Midi*, the only non-Communist daily which urged its readers to vote against the Gaullist constitution. He was killed in a car crash.

** Occasionally the evidence comes from Arab sources as in this statement by an FLN suspect to a prison chaplain: "X ordered Y to keep me kneeling for two hours, naked, holding a chair above my head and to whip me if I lowered it. But while X was out of the room, after about an hour, Y told me I could put the chair down and rest, but to pick it up at once if I heard the other one coming back."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ample time to digest the lessons of the collapse of the Fourth Republic and rediscover the basic principles they lost sight of in the postwar scramble for slices of the administrative cake.

Many Frenchmen believe that when a reinvigoration of French democracy comes it will bypass the traditional parties. The new middle class has recently discovered James Burnham and is intrigued by the idea of a "managerial democracy." The monarchists believe that they will wake up one morning to find themselves at the head of a mass movement, and many socialists say that rather than see Soustelle or an army man succeed de Gaulle they would support the Comte de Paris. In many provincial towns, the schoolteachers' unions have taken the initiative in setting up an anti-clerical front with the aim of resisting the Catholic hierarchy's efforts to obtain a bigger share of the educational budget and the government's undoubted desire to give Catholicism a privileged position in the state. The quarrel is not a violent one—it is largely over outward forms and cash subsidies—and no one is likely to get hurt. It may do more good than harm, in the short run, if it stirs up discussion of public affairs and shakes some of the cobwebs off non-extremist politics. But it is making many Gaullists uneasy.

Robert Escarpit, writing in *La Dépêche du Midi,* recently reported a conversation with a young army officer. "And what about this Republic of yours?" the officer asked. "We don't hear very much about her these days."

"She's hibernating," Escarpit replied.

Which just about sums the situation up. It is a reassuring summing up in that hibernation does, after all, hold out hope of regeneration, of a renewal of health and vigor. The only snag is that hibernation can prove fatal if it goes on too long.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MAGNIFICATION OF CHANUKAH

Afterthoughts on a Festival

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

FESTIVALS, like books, have their fate. Changing times and environments can be either beneficial or detrimental to a festival's survival and, in this connection, its position within the rubrics and definitions of canon law is relatively unimportant. Witness the observance of the New Moon. There can be no doubt that, in Biblical times, the New Moon was an important festival. It is frequently mentioned alongside the Sabbath; it seems to have been an occasion when people ceased from work, and went back to listen to the teachings of the prophets and other men of God. The vision of the future with which the Book of Isaiah concludes provides "that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 66:23).

Yet, in spite of the rabbinic injunction that the New Moon be marked by an additional service (Musaf) and the recitation of the *Hallel* psalms, and also by special inserts in the statutory prayer as well as in the Grace after Meals, the New Moon today has all but lost its festive character. A generation ago it was still possible to find pious women who would abstain from work on that day—somehow the New Moon had become especially a women's festival. But even that aspect of it has been lost. Observant Jews will, of course, still follow the rabbinic provisions regarding the day's liturgy. This might mean that the daily morning service will have to be even more rushed than usual; the service must be over in time for the opening of offices and stores. The New Moon simply is no longer what it used to be in the days of the Bible!

But just as it is possible for an important festival to lose its importance, so it is possible for a minor festival to gain in esteem. Chanukah is a case in point. For modern American Jews, Chanukah ranks next in importance to the High Holy Days and the Passover. It was not always thus! In Jewish Law, Chanukah is a minor festival. Work is forbidden only during the half hour or so when the candles are burning. There are indeed liturgical inserts for the daily services, similar to those of the New Moon, but they do not make Chanukah any less workaday for all that. In some parts of the Jewish world there may have been the custom of providing the children with "Chanukah money," but *the* annual occasion for the exchange of gifts was Purim—not Chanukah.

As a matter of fact, the very reason for the observance was only dimly perceived. The Talmud records a victory of the Hasmoneans over the "Greeks," which led to the cleansing of the Temple. This, in turn, led to the "miracle of the oil"—a cruse of oil sufficient for one day lasted for eight. Yet Judah the Maccabee is not even mentioned by name. One simply lit candles for eight days to commemorate the miracle.

In the early collections of rabbinic homilies—such as the *Pesikta de Rab Kahana*—the Chanukah sermons do not contain a single reference to the historical events behind the festival. They all deal with the dedication of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and with the values of institutional religion. They are based on the Torah read-

---

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI is associate professor of Rabbinics at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY since 1954. His articles last year included "The Bible of the Synagogue" (February), "The Limits of 'People-Centered' Judaism" (May), and "Paul and Jewish Theology" (September).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ings for Chanukah and, naturally, the Torah could contain no reference to the events of the 2nd century B.C.E. Chanukah could, in fact, be nothing but a minor festival.

THE 19th and 20th centuries were the making of Chanukah. On the one hand, rationalistic tendencies were unkind to the old festival. Nobody could believe in miracles any more, and the "miracle of the oil" was demoted to the rank of a legend, which is nothing to celebrate. Happily, some other forces were at work. The same rationalism which did away with the "miracle" worked to overcome the old rabbinic ban on the reading of the "outside books," the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha contained the two Books of the Maccabees, where, in stirring language, the Maccabean battles and victories were described. If it was no longer possible to celebrate the "miracle of the oil," it now became possible to celebrate the "Feast of the Maccabees."

The first fight in history for the freedom of conscience and of worship! The victory of Jewish monotheism over Hellenistic paganism! The Jewish idea of the equality of all men triumphing over an economy based on slavery—for the latter was still maintained by as enlightened a Greek as Aristotle himself. Such were the motivations for the new celebration of Chanukah. The oil miracle was a small price to pay for such a glorious new festival, a festival, moreover, which was so much in line with contemporary Jewish aspirations for political freedom and emancipation. "Restore my house of prayer," so ran the old Chanukah hymn, *Maoz Tzur,* "and there I will sacrifice a thanksgiving offering." But the 19th century had a different language: "Yours the message cheering," the new hymn, "Rock of Ages," proclaimed, "that the time is nearing, which will see all men free, tyrants disappearing!"

The Reform Jews who thus re-interpreted Chanukah were usually quite antagonistic toward the rising movement of Jewish nationalism and Zionism. But both the opposing elements helped in the transformation of Chanukah from a minor to a major festival. For the Zionists, too, had a great liking for this festival. Any nationalist movement is in need of heroes whose shining example can be held up to fire the imagination of a new generation. Nineteenth-century nationalist movements in Europe could point with pride to the freedom fighters of past ages. Jewish nationalism had only the "People of the Book." Jewish Garibaldis were not so easy to find—the glories of Israel have usually been of a spiritual nature. In a world of nations and of empires, Israel was, in the words of the prophet Balaam, "a people that shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations" (Numbers 23:9). Yet the Jews had their Maccabees—they could serve as an inspiration for the rising nationalist movement. Theodor Herzl wrote a moving piece about the Chanukah candlestick. And the songs of the new movement helped the transformation of the festival. "Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord," thus sang the Psalmist of old, "or make all His praise to be heard?" (Psalm 106:2). But a modern Zionist Chanukah song proclaims: "Who can express the mighty acts of *Israel?*" And it goes on to relate that "in those days, at this time, the Maccabee was the savior and redeemer. But in our days, the whole people of Israel will unite and arise to redeem itself."

Such re-interpretations in and by themselves would have been sufficient to make Chanukah viable in the modern world. But in time a third factor came to strengthen it —one which might have borne the whole burden of the festival even if no re-interpretation had ever been attempted. Chanukah may have been a minor festival in the Jewish calendar. But Christmas is a major festival in the Christian calendar. And the 25th day of the month of Kislev (the beginning of Chanukah) has an uncanny habit of more or less coinciding with the 25th day of the month of December. (Woe unto the American Jewish parents in those years when it does not!)

No doubt, the annual winter festival is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

older than either Chanukah or Christmas, and both may have a common pagan ancestry. The kindling of lights is common to them, too. But here the resemblance ends—unless, of course, one were to claim that without the victory of the Maccabees in the 2nd century B.C.E. there never would have been any Judaism left two centuries later for Jesus of Nazareth to transform into Christianity. (As a matter of fact, the festival calendar of the Roman Catholic Church does contain a "Feast of the Maccabees.") Yet all of this is neither here nor there. Yuletide, in Christian civilization, is the traditional season for "peace on earth, good will to men." And it is this Yuletide "spirit" which is made to live also in the American Jewish Chanukah observance. From the exchange of gifts, to home decorations, to greeting cards, to specially imprinted gift wrapping paper, Chanukah matches Christmas. If, because of religious scruples, the "Chanukah bush" has as yet fallen short of universal acceptance, the candelabrum can be made to enter the competition against the Christmas tree; and cut-out paper Maccabees can console the Hebrew infant for the absence of a crèche. Moreover, if everything else fails, one is fortified by the knowledge that Chanukah lasts for eight long days with gifts every single night.

Festivals, like books, have their fate.

* * *

THE kindling of the Chanukah lights gave rise to a question of far-reaching consequences in the Babylonian Talmud. The Talmud establishes the rule that the kindling of the lights is to be preceded by the benediction: "Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and commanded us to kindle the lights of Chanukah" (b. *Shabbat* 23a).

Immediately the question is raised: "Where did God command us to do that?" The underlying assumption here is that the revelation at Mount Sinai was a complete and perfect revelation, in which God communicated to Israel all they had to know about their religious obligations. Yet one may search the Five Books of Moses from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy, and one will not come across the slightest hint of any "commandment" for the kindling of Chanukah lights. Still, if God had really commanded us to kindle the Chanukah lights, how could He have omitted this item in the official transcript of His commands, in the Torah?

Like so many other questions in the Talmud, this one was asked only to provide an excuse for a good answer. The good answer was given by Rab Iviya, a 4th-century Babylonian teacher, and was in the form of a reference to the 17th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. There we read that "if there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment . . . then thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days; and thou shalt inquire; and they shall declare unto thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the tenor of the sentence, which they shall declare unto thee. . . . According to the law which they shall teach thee . . . thou shalt do; thou shalt not turn aside from the sentence which they shall declare unto thee, to the right hand, nor to the left" (Deuteronomy 17:8–11).

In the evolution of Rabbinic Judaism, these were very important verses indeed. It is evident that here the Law was making provision for the eventuality that a matter might arise in the future which was not specifically covered in the codes of the sacred text. Naturally, in such a case, the priests would be the ones whose "lips should keep knowledge," and at whose "mouth one should seek the Law" (Malachi 2:7). This, indeed, seems to have been the procedure in the days of the First Temple, and at the beginning of the period of the Second Temple. But our text does not only speak about the Levitical priesthood. It also contains a reference to "the judge that shall be in those days"; and this was the basis seized on by the lay scholars in the days of the Second Temple in their attempt to break the priestly monopoly. Not just the heredi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tary priesthood, so they claimed, but also the lay Israelite—to the extent to which his knowledge qualifies him for the office of judge—can act as an interpreter of Torah. Here was the origin of the Pharisaic movement.

Anything then, which, though not contained in the Five Books of Moses, was ordained by a duly constituted authority—priestly or otherwise—could rely on the scriptural support furnished by the 17th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. And, since the authority behind Deuteronomy was divine authority, was, in fact, God Himself, that authority carried over to the later enactments reached on the basis of Deuteronomy. Now Chanukah, it was believed, was instituted by the duly constituted *Bet Din,* or court of law, of the Hasmoneans. Therefore Rab Iviya could invoke this chapter of Deuteronomy as the scriptural basis for the "commandment" of the Chanukah lights.

A more sophisticated generation was unable to follow this chain of reasoning. Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, for example, the organizer of American Reform Judaism, seems to have been bothered by the same question which bothered the Talmud, but was unable to give Rab Iviya's answer. In his reformed prayer book, the *Minhag America,* Wise omitted the benediction about God's commanding us to kindle the Chanukah lights. Instead, he made use of another benediction, one which the Tradition had prescribed for the first night of Chanukah, thanking God for "keeping us alive, sustaining us, and letting us reach this season": he simply then tacked on the words: "to kindle the Chanukah lights." Wise would not have done away with the Festival of Chanukah, for the reasons we have discussed. But he was also too much of a rationalist to believe that God Himself had commanded its observance.

Wise and those who thought like him thus missed a very good opportunity of grounding their Reform Judaism in the Tradition itself. For what is implied in Rab Iviya's answer is this: the word of God is not confined to the Five Books of Moses. Each generation has its own unprecedented religious needs—unprovided for by the earlier codes. But God does not remain silent; He is behind the endeavor of the authorized interpreters who take into account the new needs and the unprecedented circumstances. If God's word were confined to the Five Books of Moses, there could be no Reform Judaism. There could not even have come into existence a Rabbinic Judaism. But if, on the other hand, the Tradition concedes that an innovation of the Hasmonean law court represented a divine "commandment," then, and only then, are we justified in speaking about the "unfolding" Will of God, and about "progressive revelation." (Perhaps, then, Rab Iviya in the 4th century was an even better "Reform Jew" than Rabbi Wise in the 19th.)

On reciting the benediction praising God "Who has commanded us to kindle the lights of Chanukah," it is good to bear in mind the 17th chapter of Deuteronomy—and its Pharisaic interpretation which made possible the evolution and development of a Judaism which can be as fresh and as alive "at this season" as it was "in those days."

Indeed, the Talmud raised a question of far-reaching consequences.

* * *

The story of Chanukah, as presented in the Sunday school, is a story of "good guys" (the Maccabees) and "bad guys" (the Greeks, or—with somewhat greater historical accuracy—the Hellenistic Syrians). Of course the "good guys" won—or there would be no Festival of Chanukah to celebrate. This makes a good story, and it lends itself beautifully to stage productions. The only trouble is: life is stranger than fiction.

In a little Schocken book, *The Maccabees,* Professor Elias Bickermann takes a second look at the conventional Chanukah story, and contrasts it with what the historical sources themselves have to say on the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

subject. The results are somewhat startling. The glorious Maccabean war turns out to have been first and foremost a Jewish civil war, with the Syrians called in by one of the contending factions. At issue was the question of "Hellenization." There was a powerful section of the Jewish population prepared to throw overboard their Jewish heritage and to swallow, hook, line, and sinker, the government-sponsored brand of Hellenism, which had already been willingly accepted in the surrounding territories. Some of the "best families" of Jerusalem were counted in on this. The Maccabees, at first a mere band of guerrillas, became the leaders of those other sections of the population who were determined to remain "loyal to the covenant of their fathers." The Maccabees emerged the victors—but their victory by no means settled the question of Hellenization.

When the victorious Maccabees instituted the Festival of Chanukah, Bickermann argues, they did something unprecedented in the annals of Judaism. No previous victory in battle had been commemorated by an annual observance in the Jewish calendar. The Greeks, however, were in the habit of fixing this kind of celebration. What is more, in choosing the kindling of lights as the characteristic observance of their victory celebration, the Maccabees imitated a typical Hellenistic custom. The very observance of Chanukah, then, looks like a Jewish bow in the direction of Hellenism. What, therefore, was the battle all about?

The succeeding history of the Hasmonean dynasty was one of typical Hellenistic princelings—with all the trappings. This is easy to shrug off by reminding ourselves that the later Hasmoneans sided with the Sadducees, and that they are, therefore, not really representative of the "mainstream" of Judaism. But the picture does not change when we look into the documents which form the very basis of Pharisaic-Rabbinic Judaism. Professor Saul Liebermann has written two important books on *Greek in Jewish Palestine,* and on *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*—the titles almost tell the story. And what Professor Liebermann is discussing is not the question of fringe groups in Judaism, of Sadducees and degenerate scions of the Hasmonean house. He is talking about the Mishnah and the teachers of the Mishnah. He is showing how the Greek language and Greek ideas—and even Hellenistic cultic forms—have entered the main citadel of Judaism, and helped shape the very form taken by Jewish legal codes and teachings. Again, we might be tempted to ask, was the Maccabean battle fought in vain?

We find an answer to this question—a negative answer—in Bickermann's work. There were, says Professor Bickermann, two forms of "Hellenization." The one was marked by the willingness to throw away one's Jewish heritage and put the foreign culture in its place; the other tried to find room within the Jewish culture for the good things which Hellenism had to offer. This was the Hellenism of the Maccabees.

What the Festival of Chanukah commemorates, therefore, is not the struggle of Jewish faith and culture against Hellenism and Greek culture. Rather is it the commemoration of a struggle between those who were ready to assimilate their Judaism to Hellenism, and those who were ready to assimilate valuable aspects of Hellenism to their Judaism.

It is the question of "assimilation" which the celebration of Chanukah induces us to ask anew each year. "Assimilation"—that much misunderstood word! In some Jewish circles it is given a negative connotation exclusively. If you admit that you are in favor of assimilation, they put you down as opposed to "Jewish survival," as uninterested in Jewish values. But others have read Ahad Ha'am, and know that there is a difference between "assimilation" and mere "imitation." Still others have read Hermann Cohen, and know how to distinguish between "active assimilation" and "passive assimilation."

Assimilation is something that cannot be disposed of by slogan thinking. In its nega-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive aspect, it is pursued as much by the Zionist radical who wants the Jews to be "a nation like unto all the other nations" as it is by the more conventional "assimilationist" who is eager to lose all traces of his Judaism, and to merge in the crowd. In its positive aspect, it is something that has gone on in Judaism since time immemorial, and something that is going on as long as Judaism desires to remain alive. The Maccabees were neither the first nor the last to enrich Judaism with borrowings from Hellas. But it takes study and much thought—and also taste—to know where to draw the line.

And come to think of it, what are we to say about our 20th-century American Chanukah?

TWO POEMS

IRVING FELDMAN

The Lost Language

I HAVE eaten all my words,
And still I am not satisfied!
Fourteen thousand and twenty blackbirds
Hushed under my side.

And when I think of what I have written
Or might have and can and shall write
—My life, this appetite,
But how shall I eat the food forgotten?
And think of how my envy like a lust
Kept me up, me and Themistocles,
And how the night unveiled a noble bust
When I thought of glory—but that doesn't
please.
So much ambition,
And so little nutrition.

II

Après de déluge, moi.
There it is, all the sad tale—
A perfect post-diluvian male,
And other humanist ta ran ta ra.
For, after all, it's only disgrace,
At the very best, to outlive
(Half-monadnock, half-sieve)
The saddest thing in the life of the race.

And when I think how many fathoms deep
Debris of that mighty birth . . .
O then there were words in the earth!
That were the things they named
And lay like manna in easy reach,
And when you spoke, there was speech.

Very hungry and not a little ashamed,
For passion is no longer food,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I have taken up again,
In ghostly parody, pot and pen,
And sit to gnaw my chattering brood.

One cup of Lethe and it's always too late.
Where are you, *o liebe breyt?*

The Dream

"OLD one, wrestler, friend,
Awake! all must have an end,
And we two with coming of day
Must end our little play
And thank whomever we should
Our peace required so little blood.
So Jacob on his morn awoke,
His thigh touched by angel's stroke,
And for a tendon would not heal
Now was namèd, Israel.
They all one night toiled on the ground,
We have but followed in their round.
To know this is to breathe again.
Step back! So the world would begin."

"We have blessed, having bled.
This is all that need be said.
Some power would not let us kill.
Be joyous, be joyous still!"

II

So I had dreamt we spoke
In that sweet minute before I woke,
I and the figure of my past,
—Dreaming of an army massed
By the ramparts of the fallen town
Where, horses kneeling, swords down,
The victor with the vanquished cries
And the smiling wounded open their eyes,
O glad solemnities, noble joys!
—Until I saw two ragged boys
In a dusty corner on the ground
Pummeling each other round
With blinded eyes, hands that burn,
Each one crying out in turn,
"Let me go! let me go!"
And "Never! no, no, no!"

IRVING FELDMAN, whose poems and reviews have appeared frequently in our pages, teaches in the English department of Kenyon College.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE KLAN TRIES A COMEBACK

In the Wake of Desegregation

WILMA DYKEMAN and JAMES STOKELY

DURING the spring of 1959, a number of posters appeared on trees and utility poles in certain sections of Little Rock and at least eight other Arkansas towns, and along major highways in southeast and southwest parts of the state: "Be a Real Citizen!" "Pay Your Poll Tax," "Join the U. S. Klans, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Incorporated (a chartered organization)." Some of these signs gave a Little Rock post-office box number as the sole address; others were traced to a real estate salesman in Texas.

When word of the Klan's reappearance, after an absence from Arkansas for a quarter of a century, reached Governor Faubus, he said he was against secret organizations, but promptly shifted the burden of responsibility from local shoulders. "If it is true that the Klan is reorganizing, then it's a direct result of the improper use of Federal power."

By the summer of 1959 there were *three* Klans in Arkansas: the "U. S. Klans, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," headed by a barber named A. C. Hightower; the "Association of Arkansas Klans," whose posters said it stood for white supremacy, segregation, protection of pure womanhood and the Christian religion; and the "Original Ku Klux Klan," led by a resident of Dallas, Texas. Each group claimed that the other two were mere offshoots of the one "true" organization.

WILMA DYKEMAN and JAMES STOKELY, who live in Newport, Tennessee, are the authors of *Neither Black Nor White* (1958). Mr. Stokely is a farmer and poet; his wife has contributed a volume to the Rivers of America series. Jointly, they have reported on the Southern scene for such magazines as the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *Progressive*. This is their first article for COMMENTARY.

Hightower, Grand Dragon of the best known group, said his "members are strictly law-abiding citizens. The Klan will not be involved in any violence whatever." On the dark, damp evening of Labor Day 1959, however, following a relatively peaceful reopening of Little Rock's schools, now integrated, the quiet of the city was shattered by three dynamite explosions. They were aimed at three public officials. Within seventeen hours, J. D. Sims, a truck driver, was arrested. Police said he was a member of the KKK.

This sequence of events was not unique to Little Rock. Elsewhere in the South since 1954, the Klan has geared its slightly renovated hood and sheet amidst protestations of non-violence, only to have assaults and explosions erupt in its wake.

"The Ku Klux Klan is a dying body," a Southern social scientist said not long ago. "But note that I said dying and not dead. There's an important difference. A mad dog may be meanest just before it dies."

This would seem to be a fairly accurate summary of the present state of the Ku Klux Klan, that illegitimate offspring of boredom and war's dislocations, conceived in ignorance and isolation and nourished on fear. We live in a time when economic boycott and character assassination and other penalties of such sophisticated nature render the tar and feather frontier methods of the Klan unstylish. And yet, with the South caught in the throes of an emotional experience more intense than any similar upheaval since the Civil War, it was probably inevitable that such anachronisms as the Klan should be revived.

Actually, there have been two Klans in the history of the United States. The first flourished following the Civil War, when

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Reconstruction had dispossessed the white leaders of the South. The second was organized during the years of social upheaval following World War I and became a national, rather than merely a regional, movement.

IN THE long bleak December of 1865, a half-dozen young men in the village of Pulaski, Tennessee, gathered in the ruins of a deserted mansion on the edge of town, and formed a new club for entertainment and adventure. With a true Southern affinity for rhetoric, they turned to the Greek for their group's title—"Kuklos" meaning circle—and with a flair for drama they swore each other to secrecy concerning their rites and their nocturnal rides through the countryside.

Winter wore on, spring and summer passed, rumors of lights and activities in the deserted house and tales of mysterious horsemen filtered through the rural back country. Stories of ghosts of Confederate dead became more frequent, and fear began to accompany any mention of the secret band. Those who had looked on the club as a prank grew increasingly aware of its possibilities as a weapon for control of the groping, uneducated freedmen. Other clubs, called Dens, were formed, and the KKK began its transformation from a social club to a vigilante band.

By the spring of 1867 there were enough Dens of the Klan in Tennessee and other Southern states to call a secret meeting of delegates in Nashville, in which the KKK elected as its first leader the immensely popular cavalryman, General Nathan Bedford Forrest. The Wizard of the Saddle became the Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

The hierarchy of the Klan—the Dragons, the Furies, the Goblins, and Night-Hawks—were planters and politicians and businessmen who had been temporarily toppled from leadership by the combined power of the Negro Unions and the Loyal Leagues of Reconstruction. The rank and file of the Klan, called Ghouls, were the lower-income whites who had always been in keenest and closest competition with the Negroes. Now they had found their secret weapon—behind the anonymity of hoods and robes; with the tacit approval of the majority of their communities, they rode the highways and lonely country lanes, through cities and county seats, intimidating at first by suggestion, then terrorizing by open violence. They brought the Negro vote under their control, expelled carpetbaggers, and finally in effect nullified the laws of Congress.

General Forrest, in 1868, claimed the Klan had more than half a million members throughout the South, that it was "a protective, political, military organization." The Klan's threat without example was like war without ammunition, however, and so the game of pretending to be Confederate ghosts soon gave way to leather and hemp and kerosene. In disgust and despair at the degradation of its professed ideals, General Forrest formally disbanded the Klan about 1869. Unfortunately, he and his fellows had created a force they could neither control nor recall. Cursed with secrecy and lawlessness and masked in its beginnings with all the romance of the Crusades, there were too few Southerners who could see the Klan as clearly as the North Carolina judge who wrote that at best it "is committing one crime to prevent or punish another." In 1871–72, Congress passed anti-Klan legislation which halted some of the terrorism and brought it into public disrepute.

Although its growth was stunted, its roots remained deep and green, however, as the birth of the second Ku Klux Klan demonstrated in 1915. Something of the difference in spirit between the two Klans may be got by scanning their literature. During the 1860's their calls to meeting included such a verse as this:

Thrice hath the lone owl hooted,
And thrice the panther cried;
And swifter through the darkness,
The Pale Brigade shall ride.
No trumpet sounds its coming,
And no drum-beat stirs the air;
But noiseless in their vengeance,
They wreak it everywhere.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Klan of 1915 and later vintage circulated such jingles as:

I'd rather be a Klansman robed in pure white
Than a Catholic priest black as night,
Loyal to the United States my home,
Rather than the dago Pope in Rome.

The Klan revived on Stone Mountain, near Atlanta, Georgia, in 1915, had widened its embrace to include not only all-white supremacists but anti-Catholics and anti-Semites as well. It had strong overtones of of the old pre-Civil War Know-Nothing movement, with its rabid suspicion and denunciation of all "alien influences." Its new mentor was a former revivalist and traveling salesman, one William J. Simmons, who, along with an able promoter named Clarke, realized the commercial possibilities of such a ready-made organization. While its attack in the South centered on the rising ambitions of the Negroes, in other parts of the nation the Klan kindled resentments against Jews, Catholics, and immigrant groups.

By 1921 an investigation revealed a national membership of some one hundred thousand. The Chief of Staff, or Imperial Kleagle, to the Imperial Wizard, asserted that the Klan was actively operating in forty-five states and had a King Kleagle or state manager in forty-one states. The nation was divided into nine Domains with a Grand Goblin directing activities in each group. The Imperial Wizard himself denied any prejudice on the part of the Klan. "We are not anti-Jewish," he told one reporter. "Any Jew who can subscribe to the tenets of the Christian religion can get in."

Politically, Klan influence grew by leaps and bounds. It was effective in national and state elections of 1922 and 1924, and in Indiana the Kluxers took control of the Republican party to hand-pick the governor. Corruption in the upper echelons and violence in the lower soon became so blatant, however, that public revulsion once more caused the Klan to fade.

Following World War II, with its new crop of tensions and rumors, an effort to revive the Klan began with another ceremony at Stone Mountain. This time an estimated five thousand hooded Klansmen initiated one thousand new members into their brotherhood, announced that if an attempt was made to practice President Truman's civil rights program "blood will run in the streets," and pinned their hopes on the Dixiecrat party. As the Dixiecrats faded and the fury of the Klan began to vent itself with increasing frequency on white persons rather than Negroes, some of its Dragons were jailed, state anti-masking laws were passed, and the Klan was put on the attorney general's list of subversive organizations.

Although the Klan seemed by 1954 to be thoroughly discredited and discouraged, it was inevitable that the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision of that year would provide it with new fuel for its fires. In the years since, burning crosses have lit up many a lawn from Richmond to Houston, from the Gulf Coast to the Blue Ridge.

Nineteen fifty-six especially saw a renewed outburst of Klan activity in many states. In North Alabama, Asa ("Ace") Carter headed a group he called the "Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy." One of the most violent of the groups, it involved blood-rite initiations, the carrying of weapons, and vicious diatribes against Jews and Catholics as well as Negroes, especially Negro entertainers. Georgia, Florida, Texas, North and South Carolina, and even Louisiana, which had been relatively free of Klan activity for over twenty-five years, saw new Klaverns formed under a variety of names, with initiation fees ranging from three to ten dollars. But when a fellow klansman asked Ace Carter what was happening to all the initiation money and a free-for-all fight and shooting ensued, with Carter's subsequent arrest, and when it was discovered that one of the Grand Dragons had married a teenage girl some thirty years his junior, even the Klan's public became fed up.

It seems unlikely that any organization as crude in its language and brutal in its actions as the Klan can flourish long in our present milieu. Even the most reactionary

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

newspapers have opposed the rebirth of the KKK. When it reappeared in Virginia after an absence of many years, the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* said, "Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders of Virginia have issued a statement elsewhere in today's paper calling on religiously motivated citizens and police officers to be on the alert for any manifestations on Virginia soil of 'the Klan's terrorist tactics and its appeals to the evil passions of hatred and bigotry.' The statement is appropriate and timely, To repeat, Virginia doesn't want to be saved by these horn-swogglers and fervent seekers after boodle." In Alabama, when crosses were burned near two churches, the Gadsden *Times* stated, "They are acts which should be outlawed, vigorously opposed by decent, law-abiding citizens. What right can the KKK possibly claim to flaunt itself before the Church? It does indeed burn the Cross." In Chattanooga, the extreme right-wing and segregationist *News-Free Press* said that the KKK "is a skeleton in the South's closet, a shame to be apologized for, a source of embarrassment, and of no benefit to the South. If the South relies upon bedsheets and burning crosses, if misguided individuals seek recourse through whip and gun, if violence becomes an accepted tool, then the South not only will lose in its efforts to maintain its traditions, but will deserve the defeat."

The fact that the Klan receives a poor press is subordinate to a more fundamental fact: it is shunned like the plague, at least for all public purposes, by members of those really active segregation groups that have sprung up in most parts of the South since 1954. In certain places there was some intermingling with the Klan during the early days of the White Citizens' Councils—now called just Citizens' Councils, not indeed because they have begun to include members of other colors, but in keeping with their attempt to attract adherents of extreme right-wing "causes" other than racial segregation and thereby build a broader base for their propaganda and activities. The Councils realized the danger of weakening their assult against integration by attacking religious minorities or comporting themselves in such a way as to alienate the respectable classes of the community. Several months ago a newspaper man in South Carolina warned the Citizens' Councils of his state to be on the alert against KKK infiltration: "The strength and influence of Councils, not only in South Carolina but throughout the South, is based fundamentally on the acceptance accorded them by the substantial elements of the communities in which they are active." He pointed out that subversion from within, by Klansmen, could destroy the councils as surely as attacks from without.

The Klan's unsavory reputation for violence provided the Councils an opportunity to denounce the sheet-and-dagger spookery of the Klan's defiance and by contrast make their own grey-flannel-suited defiance of the Supreme Court appear calm and reasonable. In the effort (which has achieved some success) to establish themselves in the public mind as an organization representing Southern respectability and moderation, it was necessary for the Councils to discover extremists to either side of them on the desegregation issue. So the Councils said, "We do not believe in the KKK on one hand, nor in the NAACP on the other." (In fact, some of the laws invoked by several Southern states in an effort to destroy the NAACP were laws originally adopted to get rid of the old Ku Klux Klan.) Arkansas Attorney General Bruce Bennett said he classified the KKK "with the NAACP as a foreign organization with unlawful designs on the peace and order of our state." The irony of this, of course, lies precisely in the fact that the NAACP's most powerful weapon has been the law, through which it has won its sanctions and victories.

THE Citizens' Councils showed the more ambitious and sophisticated members of the Klan the need for a face-lifting. Indeed, "respectability" seems to have become the new watchword of some of the Klan leaders. Addressing a crowd of some one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thousand people near Bradenton, Florida, in August 1958, Imperial Wizard (by day a paint sprayer) Eldon L. Edwards of College Park, Georgia, of the U. S. Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, said his group "is not a lynching or whipping organization but a white man's Christian, benevolent, fraternal order." At a meeting of the Florida Klan in August 1959, a Baptist preacher from Dallas, Texas, said, "It was circumstances such as exist today that led to the times when klansmen marched, thousands strong, through Florida cities, and those times will be repeated before long." He hastened to add that the present strategy was to fight through votes. The slogan was "ballots not bullets."

The Klan made other gestures toward respectability. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, on May 3, 1957, a newspaper ran this headline on its sport page, "Hourigan's Homer Beats Woolens." The home run was scored by a team new to the area's fast-growing commercial league: the Knights. But behind the new softball uniforms of the Knights swished the old robes of the local Ku Klux Klan. Handbills distributed in the city and vicinity soon set forth the motive behind the Klan's sponsorship of a team—a desire to emphasize the Klan's "recreation side" and demonstrate their interest in "civic good."

The Chattanooga *Times* did not allow the Klan to succeed in its efforts. "We know Chattanooga does not wish to be represented in the state and Southern softball championship tournaments by the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. We suspect that the entire Chattanooga softball program will be damaged by this retreat from true sportsmanship."

A week later the newspaper posed this blunt question: "Are the great national corporations of Du Pont and Combustion Engineering; Peerless Woolen Mills, part of the huge Burlington Mills; the Chattanooga Gas Company and the Ridgedale Merchants prepared to go on with their teams playing ball with the Ku Klux Klan? We do not believe so." Three days later, Du Pont, Combustion Engineering, and Peerless Woolen Mills withdrew their teams and the Chattanooga Commercial AA Softball League was dissolved. This incident illustrates two basic facts about the present KKK: first, its malignant energy, though flagging in some places and dissipated in others, has far from disappeared; second, being essentially a rural folkway of physical violence, the Klan's survival depends on the extent to which it can conceal its barbarism behind the mask of sober citizenship.

THE present status of the Klan is low indeed. Harold Fleming, executive director of the Southern Regional Council, a biracial research organization with headquarters in Atlanta, has said, "It is perhaps a measure of southern progress that the mummery and frontier methods of the Ku Klux Klan are no longer respectable. Ineptly led, unmasked by state laws, and inhibited by the unfriendly attentions of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, it is a 'fringe' group in the full meaning of the term."

However, as another young Southerner put it, "The Citizens' Councils are the watchdogs of segregation in the Deep South—but when the going gets rough and they need bulldogs, with that instinct for the jugular, the Klan will be there to step in."

In some places the Klan has already stepped in. During their ugly resurgence in 1956 and 1957, there were publicized individual atrocities: in South Carolina, for instance, the shooting of a white man who lived with a Negro woman; the attack on a respected high school band leader who was waylaid and brutally beaten, apparently the victim of a case of mistaken identity or simply random sadism. In yet another part of the state, a fifty-eight-year-old Negro man caring for the seven children of a white neighbor sharecropper who was sick, was chained and beaten with blackjacks and sticks. The Klan had decided to punish the Negro because he was "mixing with white folks." In Alabama a feeble-minded black man was picked up off the street and emasculated.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Klan protests that all these acts cannot be blamed on them, but Mayor Henry Savage, Jr., of Camden, South Carolina, said after his town's band leader was beaten and hospitalized, "Whether it was the Klan or not, when they spread out a sheet they invited thugs to come under it and the responsibility is theirs."

ALONG with public revulsion at the Klan's desecration of houses of worship and destruction of buildings of learning, there have been two other factors prominent in the Klan's present decline. The first is factionalism among the various groups. The Charlotte *Observer* pointed out some months ago that so many different Klan groups were operating in South Carolina that "it is impossible to tell the Grand Dragons, Wizards, and Kleagles apart without a program." A Florida KKK official said there are so many different Klans in his state that the old counter-signs and passwords won't work any more. "We have too many chiefs and not enough Indians to stage a war dance." Such anarchy leads inevitably to excesses and ridiculous incidents like the one that took place at Maxton, North Carolina, in January 1958, when a group of whooping, wild-firing Lumbee Indians forced a white-robed gathering to scatter in unceremonious haste.

A second major factor in the Klan's present decline is the presence of the new Negro in the South. Those klansmen who see all Negroes in the old fearful, superstitious stereotypes, who can be frightened by a bedsheet and a burning cross, are as out of date today as a mule on a Delta cotton plantation. When an imported handful of klansmen rode through the Negro section of Clinton, Tennessee, during its time of turmoil with John Kasper, they were laughed off their route and the demonstration was cut short. In Florida, during one well publicized Klan meeting, Negroes gathered at a public meeting where their minister instructed them as Christians to love everybody. Then he prayed, "Get the Holy Ghost to visit the Klan out there tonight."

In only one Southern state is the Klan in any sort of flourishing condition today. Alabama has seen a flagrant revival of KKK activities. There has been an increase in parades of cars, sometimes decorated with lighted crosses, carrying robed klansmen through various towns. Highway signs of welcome by the Klan have appeared alongside other civic signs on the outskirts of several cities. Its increasing influence is noted in such instances as that in Tuscaloosa when the administrator of the Hale Memorial Hospital and two of his staff members resigned their positions after receiving numerous threats from the KKK. The Klan objected to white nurses serving Negro patients in the tuberculosis hospital.

Law enforcement officials have admitted that at least a dozen floggings of Negroes in rural western Alabama have taken place, and there has been alarm in some areas over the possibility of growing Klan power in community and even state government. It is well known that the Grand Dragon of the KKK in Alabama, Robert Shelton of Tuscaloosa, worked in 1958 for the election of the present Governor, John Patterson; Governor Patterson has never repudiated his support. In September, when the Alabama legislature seemed in a mood to advance more help to the mentally ill in the state, Governor Patterson opposed the proposed added tax on liquor and beer. Grand Dragon Shelton said he and the Klan strongly oppose any help for the mentally ill so long as the present setup exists.

"I am against giving any more money to the insane hospitals or to the University of Alabama Medical College, which is the rottenest place in Alabama," Shelton said. "I am not opposed to helping the Alabama folks who are mentally ill, but I want the program to be completely separate from the National Mental Health Association, which has been linked with the Communists. As long they have those alien psychiatrists at the mental hospitals and at the University Medical College, as long as they have those doctors who talk in broken English with an alien accent, then I do not favor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

giving them any more money at all." When Governor Patterson last summer endorsed Senator John F. Kennedy as his personal candidate for President, he was visited by a thirty-two-man delegation headed by the Imperial Kladd of Prattville, Alabama. Two of the questions submitted to the Governor were: "Did it ever occur to you that you are being used as a guinea pig by the Communist-Jewish integrators to sample the political sentiment of the South for a most distinguished candidate, John Kennedy?" and "How much money will the Jewish firm of the arch integrationist and avowed enemy of the South, Herbert Lehman, make out of the twenty million dollars (in road bonds bought by Lehman Brothers) you arranged for Lehman Brothers to undertake?"

The growing arrogance of the Alabama Klan was recently displayed and challenged when a young restaurant owner in Montgomery shot and killed an alleged member of the group after the Klan had repeatedly warned him to fire the Negro waiters he employed at his restaurant. The Klan said that an establishment which fired white waitresses to hire Negro men should not display the Confederate flag. "I've been living in Montgomery all my life," the restaurant owner said, "and if any group of Klansmen have got guts enough to come in my place and remove the Confederate flags, they are welcome to try it."

ALTHOUGH Alabama is the only state with any really significant Klan organization at the moment, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, a few sections of Texas, part of piedmont North Carolina, and the area in Tennessee centered around Chattanooga (near the Georgia border), have all seen sporadic outbursts of activity. A while back, five KKK members who had plotted to bomb a Negro elementary school in Charlotte, North Carolina, were arrested. Dr. Leon H. Feldman, chairman of the North Carolina advisory board of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, pointed out that this was the third bombing attempt in as many months in that area. The two previous efforts had centered on Jewish temples. Then he said, "The Klan has shown a growing tendency of violence recently. The problem it poses does not stem from numbers of widespread public acceptance. It lies in its capacity to cause the lighting of a fuse. The existence of a known group of troublemakers operating around the state presents a menacing situation to which public officials, mass communication media, and the community must give thought."

Dr. Feldman is correct in saying that the present power of the Klan does not lie in numbers. It is doubtful if its size has ever been its most important feature. The group has been traditionally reluctant to reveal the extent of its membership and there is better reason than ever for its present reticence. Widespread public acceptance of the Klan simply does not exist and hasn't for a number of years. What *does* exist, in all parts of the South, is fear of "trouble," which may include anything from a snub at the Junior League Ball to a bombed school building. To have a cross burned at one's front door is embarrassing; to be bombarded with anonymous phone calls or hate-sheets is wearisome; to be a guinea-pig community in a strong segregation area may be a costly experience.

This is the Klan's role in the South today: as a hard core of haters it casts the shadow of its small but very real potential for violence over any affirmative steps in the direction of desegregation. Where the Klan does not act overtly for negative ends, it can deter others from carrying out positive programs. As D. J. Brittain, Jr., principal of the Clinton High School in the tumultuous first year of its desegregation, noted during his ordeal: "It doesn't take many people to make a lot of trouble."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SIMON BAR GIORA, ANCIENT JEWISH HERO

A Historical Reinterpretation

CECIL ROTH

VISITORS to Rome are inevitably taken to see the Mamertine Prison, not far from the Forum, where it is said Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome, perpetrated his deeds of bloodshed as early as the 3rd century before the Christian era. Here, below the actual building with its ancient Latin inscription, is a noisome dungeon hewn out of the rock, which is associated with some of the darkest tragedies of ancient history. Here the gallant Gaullish chieftain Vercingetorix was strangled by order of Caesar, and the accomplices of Cataline by order of Cicero, who tersely announced the execution in the single word *vixerunt* ("they have lived"). Here, according to Christian legend, St. Peter was imprisoned before his martyrdom. But for the Jew this spot has a special significance: for here Simon bar Giora was put to death in the year 71, as the symbol of the Jewish defeat, after the triumph of Vespasian and the overthrow of Jerusalem. In Roman eyes he was considered the principal leader of the revolt that had at last been crushed, after such stiff fighting and so many losses. It is amazing, and not wholly creditable, that among Jews he is barely remembered: and when he is, in terms almost of caricature.

What we know of Simon bar Giora derives entirely from the envenomed account of Flavius Josephus, the renegade Jewish historian, who may be described as the Benedict Arnold of the great war against the Romans of 66–73. Josephus had at the beginning sympathized with the uprising and been given the military command of Galilee, but he became nervous at the implications of the revolt, which seemed to him (a "bourgeois" belonging to the priestly element) to be taking too radical a tendency. At the same time, he realized how much the insurgents had underestimated the military might of Rome. After putting up a token resistance (though of course he pictures it as more than this) he went over to the enemy, and spent the rest of the war in the service of Vespasian. Subsequently, he compiled a history of the war, in which he simultaneously tried to exculpate himself, magnified the achievement of his patrons, and denigrated the leaders of the Jewish revolt who were more steadfast than himself.

Posterity must remain grateful to Josephus for the fact that we know a great deal about the details of the war, and about Jewish history at this period in general, for we have virtually no other sources available.* But it is preposterous to accept his record implicitly, as historians have tended to do: we are forced to rely on him for the facts, but we must be careful of his interpretations. For him, the villains of the piece were the heads of the resistance movement; in Jewish his-

---

IN HIS article last June, CECIL ROTH, the eminent Oxford historian of the Jews, described "The Jewish Revolt Against Rome." He now reinterprets one of the heroes of that revolt. He is the author of a *History of the Jews in England* (1941), *The Jews in the Renaissance* (1959), and many other works dealing with post-Biblical Jewish history.

* Except where otherwise stated, all the data on which this sketch is based are derived from Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, our only source: bar Giora is just mentioned by Tacitus, who however adds virtually nothing to our knowledge, while the theory that he is identical with Abba Sicara, leader of the "biryonim" and nephew of Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, or some other resistance leader sketchily remembered in Talmudic legend, is more than questionable. In some modern records the name occasionally figures as "Joras" (or is sometimes reversed as "Joras son of Simon"); this derives from the commemorative tablet in the Mamertine Prison, the *GI-* having been read as *J* in accordance with Italian usage.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tory, they should be among the heroes. And especially Simon bar Giora, who was put to death by the Romans as the symbol of the Jewish resistance; something at least of the strength and nobility of his character emerges even from Josephus's jaundiced picture.

THE form of the name "bar Giora" derives not from Josephus but from Tacitus, who in his brief account of the war refers to him under this name, although confusing him with his rival John of Gischala ("*Ioannes, quem et Bargioram vocabant*"). Josephus speaks of him always as "son of Giora" or the like. "Bar Giora" is of course the form in the Aramaic language, already at this time current in Palestine. *Giora* is never met with as a proper name, but in Aramaic it means "proselyte," equivalent to the Hebrew *Ger*. There is thus some reason to believe that Simon was the son of a convert to Judaism, though if this were the case it is somewhat surprising that Josephus should not have mentioned the fact, and that he should have attained such a prominent position among the leaders of a national revolt at such a time. That he was of non-Jewish extraction on his father's side is made a shade more probable by the fact that he was a native of Gerasa, or Jerash, in Trans-Jordan—a city of mixed population. According to some scholars, however, his place of origin was not the famous Gerasa but a smaller place of the same name in Judea.

Josephus refers to Simon as a "young man" at the period of the revolt, but he was old enough to have played a prominent role in it from the beginning; presumably, therefore, he was not at this time less than thirty years of age, having been born about the year 35. He was endowed with remarkable strength and physical courage, as well as the personal magnetism indispensable for a revolutionary military leader.

Simon first came into prominence at the time of the rout of Cestius Gallus, the Governor of Syria, in the late summer of 66, when he executed a brilliant action at the head of a fairly considerable force. He must have been active therefore for some while previous. Most probably, he was one of the many patriot leaders (Josephus calls them "brigands" and the like) who had emerged all over the country as a result of the Roman misrule of the past few years, gathering other malcontents around themselves in the mountain fastnesses and carrying out raids on the Romans and Roman sympathizers. When the Revolt began in Jerusalem in 66, many of these local rebel leaders probably converged on the capital and took their share in the fighting there, like Menahem ben Judah, head of the hyperpatriotic *sicarii* entrenched in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea; and Simon bar Giora was doubtless another of these. It seems certain that these Jewish patriots fighting against Rome were motivated by profound religious as well as patriotic feelings, and it is likely that more than one of them had his own religious, or social-religious (the two are hardly to be distinguished in Judaism) teachings. That Simon bar Giora considered himself as being to some extent a religious teacher is nowhere indicated in our sources, but it is by no means improbable: we will revert to this later. However that may be, he and his followers took a prominent share, as has been mentioned, in the rout of Cestius Gallus, who had led an army to restore order in Jerusalem. As the Romans were mounting toward the historic pass of Beth Horon, Simon and his followers fell on them, cutting off part of the rear-guard, and seizing the baggage train, which they brought back in triumph to Jerusalem.

What happened to Simon in the course of the next few months is obscure. There is some slight evidence that he took some part in the disturbances when Menahem, the leader of the *sicarii,* attempted to establish his control in Jerusalem—an episode which may be dimly reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Menahem's defeat at the hands of the priestly faction implied a check to the extremer revolutionary tendencies and a victory for the moderates. For a time Jerusalem, and the central government as a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whole, were in the hands of the bourgeois and priestly elements, to which Josephus also belonged.

SIMON bar Giora was obviously a radical, with extreme tendencies. Leaving the capital with his followers, he tried to make himself master of the district of Acrabatene, southeast of Samaria, and a well-known center of fierce patriotic sentiment. Here apparently others who shared his views rallied to him. He attacked the wealthy, sacking their houses and molesting their persons, until the provisional government in Jerusalem, headed by the ex-High Priest Hanan ben Hanan ("Ananus" in Josephus), sent an armed force against him. This Spartacist revolt (as we might call it) was put down without much difficulty, but bar Giora was able to escape, with some of his more devoted followers and their womenfolk.

Meanwhile, the survivors of Menahem ben Judah's *sicarii* faction had returned after his assassination to the Herodian fortress of Masada, on a cliff overhanging the Dead Sea, where they continued to hold out under Eleazar ben Jair. There were apparently profound differences of outlook between them and the followers of Simon. But they were united by a common antipathy to the Jerusalem government, and were prepared to join hands at least temporarily. To Masada, therefore, Simon led his followers. The two factions did not however coalesce, the newcomers and their womenfolk being allowed only to establish themselves in the lower part of the stronghold and not allowed access to the actual fortress where Eleazar and his *sicarii* were established.

The two factions did collaborate in a series of raids in which apparently they tried to extend their hold over the territory to the southwest, towards Idumea, where the representatives of the central government found themselves for a time seriously pressed. However, Simon's plans were more ambitious than those of Eleazar. The *sicarii* apparently were content to wait until the central government fell—either from internal dissension or before the Romans—and imagined that then, with the help of God, they would come into their own. Simon, on the other hand, followed an activist policy throughout his known career and hoped to establish his own ascendancy, and that of his ideas, by force of arms.

In the winter of 67–68, the news of events in the capital persuaded him that his hour had come. The disaster in Galilee, where their priest-colleague Josephus had gone over to the Romans after a shameful military debacle, had completely discredited the priestly junta in Jerusalem who had hitherto been at the head of the provisional government. Their position was further undermined by the influx of war refugees from Galilee bearing detailed reports of what had happened there. As the result of a coalition between them and the Zealots, assisted by wild Idumean tribesmen whom they summoned to their assistance, the provisional government was overthrown, and many of its leading members (including the ex-High Priest Hanan) were killed in the reign of terror which now followed.*

Simon now considered that his hour had struck. Leaving Masada (probably not wholly amicably: there is some evidence of a violent breach), he advanced westward, operating at first in the hill country. Hitherto, his social program had not been too prominently enunciated. Now it was, clearly and publicly. We have already seen that from the beginning he had attacked the rich; now, he proclaimed liberty for the slaves. We know of this only from a casual sentence of Josephus, but perhaps there is a wider significance in it: for Isaiah had spoken of the function of the Lord's anointed who was to bring good tidings to the humble, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to

* The Zealots were a politico-religious faction associated in some way with the *sicarii:* the name does not imply merely "extremist," and it is wrong to consider all leaders of the resistance movement at this time (including Simon bar Giora) to have been of the faction, as is sometimes done: he was in fact bitterly opposed to and opposed by the actual Zealots.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

announce the Day of Vengeance for the Lord. (Jesus too had applied this passage to himself [Luke IV. 18]; possibly it was at the time one of the accepted "Messianic" passages.) Hence, the divine vengeance over the Roman enemy had to be accompanied by the freeing of the captives; and he who freed the captives was the one designated by God to achieve victory. Obviously, bar Giora considered himself as more than a partisan leader.

A CONSIDERABLE force of former slaves and other proletarian sympathizers now flocked to join Simon. At one point they were recruited by some 2,000 persons —in the main probably political malcontents arrested by the Zealots—who were released from the prisons when the main body of Idumeans left Jerusalem. Before long he felt strong enough to descend into the plains, and was able to secure again the province of Acrabatene, from which he had been ejected previously, and a considerable district extending hence to the south towards Idumea. He established his capital in a small place in this district called Nain, which he heavily fortified. His troops and stores were concentrated in a valley known as Pheretai (perhaps the present Khurbet Farah, a gorge about six miles north of Jerusalem), where the hillside was honeycombed with caves which could serve as repositories for grain and other supplies. Here he made ready to attack the capital, now controlled by the Zealot faction.

Bar Giora no doubt imagined that the acceptance of his social-religious doctrine by the Jewish people as a whole was the key to victory, and that it was therefore his duty and his destiny to establish his ascendancy in the capital. The Zealots, too, had the same conviction, and an armed clash became inevitable. To forestall attack, they marched out to attack him, but were repulsed with considerable loss.

Had he followed at their heels, Simon might now have occupied the city without great opposition, but he did not yet feel himself strong enough and determined to isolate it first. The Idumeans, now strongly Jewish in sentiment notwithstanding their relatively recent conversion to Judaism, had already once exerted a preponderant force in central affairs, and Simon attempted to neutralize them first of all: Idumea seems, moreover, to have exercised a powerful attraction on him strategically. His first attempt to establish his control here failed after an indecisive battle. A little later he tried again, with stronger forces. The garrison of the fortress of Herodium refused to adhere to him, and his emissary was killed. But he secured the enthusiastic collaboration of one of the high Idumean officers, named Jacob, who not only surrendered his own command but induced his associates to follow his example, partly by persuasion and partly by treachery. Simon was now in command of the entire south of the country, including Hebron, where he found vast stores of wheat. His forces were now reckoned to amount to some 40,000 men, who for some time lived off the country, according to Josephus ravaging it like a plague of locusts.

While this had been happening, the Jerusalem Zealots had captured Simon's wife and her attendants in an ambush. His deep devotion to her was a matter of common knowledge, and she was treated as a hostage, in the expectation that this would make him come to terms. But instead he began to behave like a man distraught, wreaking his passion on any adherents, active or passive, of the Zealots and the Jerusalem administration who fell into his hands, and (according to Josephus) mutilating innocent persons who ventured outside the valley to gather fuel or herbs. He was even reported to have said that when he captured the city he would butcher the inhabitants indiscriminately unless his wife were restored to him.

After a short while, she was in fact sent back, and for a time Simon's attention was diverted elsewhere: for the Romans, having completed the subjection of Galilee and Trans-Jordan, had by now begun to invade the south of the country. Simon was unable

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to prevent the reconquest of Acrabatene by Vespasian or the overrunning of the greater part of Idumea by one of his officers, Cerealius, who captured Hebron and slaughtered the inhabitants. Gathering the remnants of his forces round him, Simon retired toward Jerusalem.

Here it seems (though Josephus presents the story in a somewhat different light), the Idumean element in his forces came to an understanding with their compatriots in the city, who were by now out of sympathy with the Zealots. They were encouraged, moreover, by the rump of the moderate party led by the former High Priest, Matthias, who had been deposed in favor of a Zealot nominee chosen by lot; for Matthias obviously hoped that Simon, sobered perhaps by responsibility, might prove less extreme. Supported and even summoned by powerful elements within the walls, belonging to almost all factions, Simon became master of Jerusalem and (it is to be presumed) titular head of what was left of the Jewish State. This happened in the month of Xanthicus in the third year of the War against the Romans: that is to say, in April or May, 69 C.E.

THERE was, however, still some opposition. John of Gischala, the leader of the Galilean war refugees in the capital, who for some time had acted in conjunction with the Zealots, entrenched himself with his followers on the Temple Mount and in the outer court of the Temple itself, and refused to come to terms: while the old-time doctrinaire Zealots, under Eleazar ben Simon, commanded the actual Sanctuary, or Inner Court.

The city itself—both the Upper and most of the Lower City, with its bazaars and shops and palaces and fortresses, and all the uncommitted civilians, their number increased by vast numbers of refugees—was in the hands of Simon. At the beginning, he was estimated to have some 10,000 men organized in fifty divisions fighting under him, in addition to the Idumean contingent of about 5,000 under its own leaders. He had at his disposal, too, the artillery seized at the beginning of the insurrection from the Roman garrison in the Antonia fortress and that which had been captured from Cestius at the time of his disastrous retreat from Jerusalem.

Simon established his headquarters in the mighty tower built by Herod near the east gate of the city and named after his brother Phasael—the northeast tower of the present citadel, popularly known today as David's Tower. Simon had to establish his control over the other intramural areas before the Romans invested the city. He therefore launched an attack on John of Gischala and his followers in the Temple Mount. But it proved unsuccessful—he had the advantage of numbers, but John of Gischala had that of position: and in due course the latter was able to extend his control also over the Inner Court of the Temple, the diehard Zealots in occupation there now coming to terms and fighting thenceforth under his command.

At the beginning of the Roman siege, the factions combined for a short while in the brilliant attack in which the Tenth Legion of evil memory was routed, but thereafter there was no effectual collaboration until the days when resistance was nearly at an end. There is no need to attempt to recapitulate here the gallant sorties, the destruction of the Roman siege-works, the construction of new bastions and strongpoints which confronted the enemy when they had overthrown weak sections of the wall, the fierce hand-to-hand fighting, the surprise attack in which Titus himself was so nearly overwhelmed, the magnificently organized attempt—all but successful—to destroy the Roman camp on the Mount of Olives, the ruthless action against all who favored compromise or even breathed the word "surrender." So far as we can tell, Simon bar Giora's was the master mind behind it all; it was he who directed the defense, and his powerful frame was foremost in all the desperate actions, leading and encouraging his forces. It was from his headquarters in the Tower of Antonia that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the city was governed, strategy was planned, policy decided. But—more important than all this—his personality inspired the defense and the defenders. As Josephus, who hated him, was forced to admit, he "was regarded with reverence and awe, and such was the esteem in which he was held by all under his command, that each man was prepared even to take his own life had he given the order."

After the Romans brought their battering rams to bear on the city walls, internal hostilities ceased, and although even now the factions did not combine under a single command, all efforts were concentrated on the common enemy. Simon henceforth permitted John of Gischala's followers to pass through his lines to man the ramparts, and Simon was henceforth reckoned the unquestioned leader of all the Jewish forces. He administered the city with a heavy hand, giving scant shrift to any person whom he suspected of treasonable intentions, or even of the desire to smuggle himself out of the city—especially if he belonged to the upper classes: John of Gischala was in complete agreement with him at least on this point. A proclamation was issued, almost modern in flavor, forbidding under pain of death any unlawful assembly of groups who might be plotting against the government, as well as any expression of defeatism by taking part in public lamentation. Simon issued instructions for any traitor to be executed on the ramparts, in full view of the enemy, so that all might see whether those to whom he intended to desert would assist him in his extremity.

THESE were harsh measures, for it was a desperate hour. The story of the atrocities of course loses no element of horror in Josephus's somber account, yet the historian unguardedly betrays the fact that vengeance against the traitors was tempered with justice. For, notwithstanding Josephus's betrayal of the forces in Galilee and his treacherous work in the Roman camp, his own father and mother, although put under arrest, were otherwise unmolested, and even allowed to have their personal attendants with them in prison—hardly the action of a party of bloodthirsty assassins.

Titus, in command of the besieging forces, showed on the other hand a studied ferocity against the besieged. On one occasion, he cut off the hands of several prisoners he had taken and sent them in to the Jewish commanders to exhort them to surrender. Their reply was noble—that they preferred honorable death to slavery, and that they would yet be saved by God, their invincible ally, in whose hands lay even now the final issue of the struggle.

Nevertheless, conditions in the city became worse and worse. One of Simon's principal lieutenants, Judas ben Judas, who was in command of one of the strategic bastions in the city wall, prevailed on some of his subordinates to surrender their position, which would have resulted in the immediate collapse of the defense. Fortunately, the Roman detachment whom they approached failed to react promptly, and during the delay Simon was able to occupy the threatened position with trustworthy troops and executed the traitors in full view of the enemy.

Yet it was a hopeless prospect: a starving city, its population swollen by tens of thousands of refugees, beset by the superbly trained and magnificently equipped legionaries of the most powerful army of the ancient world. Slowly, the defenders were pressed back, and shortly after mid-summer the Temple itself, the kernel of the defense, went up in flames.

The Upper and Lower Cities, however, each a self-contained fortress, were still in patriot hands and continued to resist tenaciously. Escape being impossible, the two resistance leaders audaciously offered to evacuate their position without further fighting in return for a safe conduct through the Roman lines, presumably in the hope of establishing themselves under conditions of freedom elsewhere. Josephus has preserved a dramatic picture of the scene that ensued. Titus in person addressed Simon and John

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as they stood facing him on the city wall, overwhelmed them with vituperation, and demanded that they should surrender unconditionally, on the understanding that their lives only would be spared.

His conditions were rejected, and fighting was resumed with renewed ferocity, the public buildings now being deliberately set in flames. At one point Simon momentarily stemmed the debacle by reoccupying the royal palace in the Upper City, and even taking prisoners. When some of the Idumean leaders contemplated surrender, he put down the attempted treachery with a stern hand, putting the peace emissaries to death, placing the chieftains under arrest, and having the rank and file watched.

But the end could not now be long delayed. In September, a month after the destruction of the Temple, the Romans delivered the final assault on the Upper City, supported by all the might of their military equipment. Before long it was in their hands. The siege of Jerusalem had ended.

JOHN of Gischala took refuge in an underground passage beneath the city. Ultimately, he was forced by hunger to surrender and in due course was sent to Italy, where he was committed to lifelong imprisonment. Simon, however, again showed himself to be made of sterner stuff. While the Romans were sacking the Upper City, he took refuge with some of his followers in the passages which honeycombed the rock under the buildings. They brought a supply of provisions sufficient to last them for some days, as well as several experienced stonecutters with the tools of their trade. They followed the existing passages so far as possible; when those ended, they began to excavate, in the hope of passing through the Roman lines and making good their escape.

Progress, however, was slow, for it was necessary to pierce through the solid rock. When all the provisions were exhausted, and he and his companions faced with starvation, Simon resorted to a ruse. Putting white robes over his military accouterments, he climbed to the surface and made a sudden appearance in the Temple Court, apparently in the hope of scaring the Roman sentries. He was hemmed in and overpowered, and his identity discovered. He was dispatched in chains to Caesarea, where Titus was now resting; and the latter ordered him to be sent to Rome, to grace the triumph which was to celebrate the great victory over the Jewish people. (Josephus, who was present, gives us the exact details of what happened on this occasion with nauseating minuteness.)

In the triumphant procession, there were a number of stages representing the captured cities, on each of which was stationed the Jewish general who had commanded it, dressed as he was at the time of his surrender. The stage representing Jerusalem was no doubt the most elaborate, and attracted most attention; in this one, presumably, Simon bar Giora figured. When the procession reached the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, it came to a standstill. Then followed the ghastly ceremonial so characteristic of Imperial Rome: Simon received the treatment reserved for the general of a defeated enemy. A halter was thrown around his neck and he was dragged to the Mamertine Prison, where he was strangled in the subterranean chamber which the visitor may still inspect today. His end was announced by a shout of elation, on hearing which Vespasian and his son completed their triumph by offering sacrifice.

There is a village named Bar Giora, today in Israel, on the Jordan border—a dour village on a rock-bound hill, proudly but confidently facing an unfriendly frontier. Perhaps it symbolizes fittingly this last fighter for Jewish independence during the siege of Jerusalem. But it is in the heart and in the historical recollection of the Jewish people that the name should live, more vividly and more intimately than it does.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ORLICK MILLER AND COMPANY

Excerpt from a Novel in Progress

JACK LUDWIG

BY DAY it was substandard candy, by night women, one his business, the other his calling. Those walleyes of his missed nothing, caught all: melted chocolate given new body in a freezer, a face patted into nice shape by beauticians or plastic surgeons, a false business statement, an old maid *shprintzed* up with assets. Respiration and color in the cheeks didn't fool Orlick Miller: he could foretell death in the ones who seemed healthy and thriving. Businessmen shivered to see him pass their candy stores: it meant they were in sadder shape than they had pleaded was the truth to fund raisers. Aged fathers and mothers knew the worst about unmarried children when tiny Orlick passed their way on his night calls.

So it was with the Novarovs when they responded to the rapping on the front door late, late this evening. What pounding! Full of fury, urgency, a fireman's fist, or a policeman's, rattling the old hinges. Sam Novarov sprang to the door, smelling smoke.

Orlick Miller had just finished looking over a doomed merchant's fire-damaged stock. Him Sam smelled. Him Sam saw, though from the pounding he'd expected a giant: tiny, his face held in profile to accommodate the walleyes velvet and purple, Orlick Miller, once into the house, stopped in the doorway, taking stock.

His water-stained brown derby never left his head; he was never seen without a wing-tip collar, a heavy satin paisley tie with a diamond sitting under the clumsy knot. His suit, left him by a dead cousin, was three or four sizes too big, bulging at every pocket with address books, graying envelopes, scraps of memo, loose dollar bills, clippings about fire, bankruptcies, recently arrived candy shipments and greenhorns.

"Where's the divorced?" Orlick Miller's singsong made the bowed Novarov heads rise. "Where's the boy whose wifey ran away to Chicago with a Jewish gangster?"

Sam pointed at Solomon. Orlick Miller ignored Daniel and his sister Esther, depressed over a game of cassino in the corner.

"So you," Orlick Miller sang at Sam, "you are the single."

Humming wildly to himself he stepped toward the two boys, grasped each one by the hand in turn, then sank into the huge mohair chair near the dark window, holding the arms like a little kid afraid of falling. His feet swung clear of the floor.

"Boys, Orlick Miller and Company can do you good," he sang in a gentle crooning voice.

Solomon looked down at his bare feet lost in outsize felt slippers.

"For real," said Orlick Miller. "How many Orlick Miller made life for, no one will ever know. Orlick Miller works at night, in the dark, like a guardian angel."

Solomon looked to his older brother for explanation. Sam shrugged.

"You've heard the saying 'marriages are made in heaven'?" Awaiting answer, Orlick Miller hummed a kind of one-man obbligato for a cantor. On pitch his singsong picked up again. "Only who is born rich, tall, beautiful gets a heaven marriage. Orlick Miller and Company looks after the remnant."

JACK LUDWIG, who is making his first appearance in COMMENTARY, was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1922 and came to the United States in 1946 to earn his doctorate at the University of California in Los Angeles. He now lives in Minneapolis, where he is a lecturer in humanities at the University of Minnesota. This excerpt, his first fiction to be printed in the United States, is from a novel he is now working on, *Solomon,* to be published by Viking Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Remnant?" Sam asked.

"Remnant? You never bought dry goods? What can't be made into a regular size garment. From these I make—create, build—a world. You follow, boys?"

Solomon's wet gray eyes gave the old man's walleyed stare no flicker of understanding.

In the corner Esther and Daniel suddenly grew aware of the stranger in the room and threw down their cards. Orlick Miller licked his lips, tugged at his rich brown goatee, humming in his extravagant Hasidic style. Nobody had ever seen him eat. Of the many legends his weird doings gave rise to, one said he lived on tea and Scotch, the hot brew by day, the cold by night. Esther got up and brought him a bottle of Johnny Walker left over from a distant New Year's Eve. His reputation accounted for the glass she handed him—a water tumbler which, beaming, Orlick Miller filled, then quickly drained, humming between swallows.

"You," he said to her, "I shouldn't look at a beauty like you ever. A face? When does Orlick Miller see at night a woman with face? *Your* marriage, pussycat, gets made in heaven, not, not," he patted a wad of photographs in his breast pocket, "not *my* ladies, not Orlick Miller's specialties."

In appreciation Esther refilled his glass. He drank with one hand held before the Novarovs like a policeman halting traffic.

"Usually I give sales talk," Orlick Miller sang softly, "but with a beauty here you'd know I was lying. Besides, Orlick Miller *wants* to tell the truth. What a relief! Truth! About my partner. . . ."

Sam recognized the line. The "and Company" that went with "Orlick Miller" was of course God. Esther, who didn't catch the reference, played straight for Orlick Miller, and interrupted. Orlick Miller waved her halt with that policeman's gesture of his.

"My partner's Creation is—I love to tell the truth, friends! The truth! His Creation isn't finished. It's a foundation; it's four walls, all bare. Finishing is for Orlick Miller."

Solomon blinked at the tiny old man seated in the chair stiff and final as a judge. Orlick Miller turned his face away and fixed Solomon with his walleyes.

"Profession," his singing voice suddenly grew loud and accusing, "what, Solomon Novarov, is your profession?"

Four heads shook in sorrowful admission. Orlick Miller was not stumped.

"Heredity gives an answer when people play dumb," he sang to himself. "Your pa was a jeweler, so automatic you go into Orlick Miller's books a jeweler."

Licking an indelible pencil, he inscribed a few Yiddish words in a peeling green oilcloth memobook.

"Money, divorced," he picked up, "how much money?"

"Not a red cent," blurted out honest Daniel.

Orlick Miller hummed in a minor key, low and mournful.

"What kind of message is this for my books, 'not a red cent'?"

"Solomon's on Relief."

"Ha! Here. I'll teach you answers: 'small, steady income.' Doesn't this make nicer reading than 'Relief'? Be honest, boys, by all means, only don't make suicide."

"Just a minute, Mr. Miller," Sam said respectfully, "you haven't said a word about the women you're trying to marry off."

"How old are they," asked Esther, "on the average I mean?"

"You think I ask? You think they tell? You think such honesty helps Orlick Miller's Creation? Friends, Orlick Miller will talk from the heart—after you, beauty," he bowed woozily in Esther's direction, "fill an empty glass."

The unsteadiness of his traffic-halting gesture at this moment would have caused head-on collisions. Toasting Esther he rose, wobbly, shaky, uncertain.

"My ladies are stuffed with years—on the average. A young beauty needs me? If she has face you can be sure she's got years and trouble. My youngs are like a giraffe or a mouse—extremes, only extremes, undersizes, oversizes, dried-out herrings, bloated cows."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Solomon shuddered.

"*Shlimazl,*" Orlick Miller sang out, his voice throaty as a fund raiser newly conscripted and making his maiden speech, "you people think this Solomon here is a shlimazl because he has nothing but bad luck. By me here in the full pockets are true *shlimazlim*—born shlimazl with no face, cross-eyes, a twist here, a crooked there. *He* cares?" Orlick Miller's accusing finger pointed up at the dark ceiling. Solomon raised his eyes and saw nothing but Orlick Miller's shadow cast by the table lamp.

"Orlick Miller's destiny," the tiny old man thundered, "rescue work! Dollies, dollies I make from my shlimazlim. 'So you don't have a sweet face,' Orlick Miller says to a red nose and broken teeth and a voice like a grater, 'by you is a head, a heart, you keep a good kitchen.' "

ORLICK Miller froze in a Yiddish Theater pose, one arm extended, the other hand over his heart.

"Picture for yourself Orlick Miller with the round pumpernickel who wants only Clark Gable, and the donkey-face who dreams every night he climbs in bed with a Garbo. With two touched-up pictures Orlick Miller makes two people blind, so blind when Lady Dracula sees Hymie Gargoyle her wedding veil is raised and the goblet already's stepped on."

The old man suddenly grasped Solomon by the wrist.

"You, you," he sang out accusingly, "if I save your life will you treat Orlick Miller different?"

Frightened, Solomon nodded.

"Like Hell! To who Orlick Miller saves, Orlick Miller is worse than a leper! Who gives thanks to Orlick Miller? Who that Orlick Miller made a mother, a wife, wants Orlick Miller should remain on earth? Who wants to have a remind she was born shlimazl, that to get married she needed a *shadchan* to finish what God started?"

Solomon, woeful with the guilt he might feel were he to show ingratitude for the rescue job the old man hadn't so much as started, sniffed, grew teary-eyed. Sam's foot rapped him smartly on the shin.

"What a world," Orlick Miller picked up in a new cantorial motif, "what, what a world—medals for firemen, for lifeguards who save a man from drowning; honor, respect for doctors, but who, who honors Orlick Miller who every night makes a quiet rescue? Orlick Miller snatched hundreds away from gas and poison. Houses in this city bulge with children Orlick Miller *made* get born! Orlick Miller's Creation, created out of lies, not just *ordinary* chaos. Orlick Miller's lies are full of the highest truth—who sees that?"

Tottering, the old man pushed his derby back off his fine white forehead, dewy with perspiration.

"Orlick Miller," he whispered, his words all furry, "loves his *shlimazlim*. First I used to laugh at them, make fun behind their backs, imitate, joke. Till I *saw*. Saw!" he suddenly shouted. "*Saw* them with leaves flying off the calendar right under their noses, with time running away right under their feet. They see too. In His whole Creation there's nothing worse than an ugly, who *sees*—a life without love, with no man's body naked in her cold bed. Orlick Miller's eyes have nearly fallen out of his head to watch her, full of love, full of hopes, then *seeing:* life is not for her. Shlimazl! To pass through this life without feeling what's a woman's truth, a naked man! Listen," Orlick Miller's finger pointed to the ceiling again, "the world talks about soul, spirit, but what *means* truth in the world is body and face.

"On my books once I had a cross-eyed rabbi who talked soul and asked me to find him face. My sweetest shlimazl, a Judith of strength and a Solomon of wisdom, her the rabbi turned down after a single look."

Esther tried to fill the old man's now empty tumbler. The bottle itself was dry. She smiled an apology.

"Oh, oh," Orlick Miller moaned tunefully, "don't give me such a sweet look, pussycat—how will I be able to look at my ladies with your beautiful face in my mind?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And you, divorced," he said, turning on Solomon, "I saw a few times that wifey of yours that ran to Chicago with the gangster. It kept me from visiting sooner. I felt ashamed. How can I show a boy who was married to such a beauty the faces I have in my pockets? But Solomon Novarov," the old man pulled at Solomon's arm, "one thing Orlick Miller guarantees: nobody in Orlick Miller's books will run to Chicago with a gangster. A beauty you won't get, but one who disappears from your bed neither."

He hefted the empty whisky bottle, turned it over, acknowledged the sad truth of its being empty.

"Only not tonight a *shidach,*" he said. "Tonight I dedicate to truth, not business. Soon Orlick Miller will come back. I've got two three numbers Solomon Novarov could live happy with. Think it over, divorced. Talk him into it, single. And you too, beauty," he touched Esther on the cheek.

Humming, suddenly radiant, he patted each Novarov in turn, hurried to the door and with his weird obbligato rising in the silence of the night outside, disappeared quickly into the darkness.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CEDARS OF LEBANON

BABEL, THE FLOOD, AND SPACE TRAVEL

A Cabbalist's View

WE OFFER below some remarks on the possibility of space travel by the renowned 18th-century Cabbalist, JONATHAN EYBESCHÜTZ. The excerpt was translated from the original Hebrew by Shabtai Rosenne, who, as an ambassador of Israel and legal advisor of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem, has recently been in the United States serving with Israel's delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. Mr. Rosenne, submitting the little treatise, notes that a recent report of a United Nations committee on the "Peaceful Uses of Outer Space" had this to say: "the Committee considered the relevance to space activities of the United Nations charter and of the statute of the International Court of Justice . . . ; it observed that as a matter of principle those instruments were not limited in their operation to the confines of the earth."

JONATHAN EYBESCHÜTZ (b. Cracow, 1690; d. Altona, Germany, 1764) was from his early youth known as a Talmudist and at twenty-one became head of the famous Yeshiva at Prague. But he soon turned to Cabbala; and when, in 1750 (after having served as rabbi of Metz), he was elected rabbi of the important triple community of Altona-Hamburg-Wandsbeck, he carried on his miracle-working, including the writing of Cabbalistic amulets for women in childbirth. An accusation by the already controversial Rabbi Jacob Emden of Altona that Eybeschütz was a follower of the false Messiah Sabbatai Zevi precipitated the famous controversy between the two rabbis that lasted for years and involved the Jews of all Europe in what became a virtual pitched battle between Sabbatians and Talmudists. The King of Denmark was called on to arbitrate. In the end Eybeschütz was vindicated and confirmed in his office by the Hamburg Senate. In addition to five Cabbalistic works, Eybeschütz published annotations on the Shulchan Aruch and many popular homiletic writings. The present selection is part of a much longer commentary on the Tower of Babel story which appears in Eybeschütz's *Tiferet Yonatan*—"Commentary on the Pentateuch."—ED.

Now this is the matter of the Generation of the Flood and of the Tower of Babel.

They aspired to build a tower which would reach to the heavens. Must we understand from this that they were so ignorant as not to know that, according to the science of building, this would have required foundations broader than the sphere of the earth?

But their calculations were based upon the natural sciences, which teach that rain falls from the steam and vapors rising up from the earth and its foundation of water. From this are formed the clouds, out of which the waters descend. The origin of the water is not in the heavens at all.

Indeed, a theory has already been put forth, based on actual observations, that the clouds, being the heavy vapors rising from the earth, do not reach a height of more than five miles at the most. That being so, it also follows that those vapors which are lighter than particles of water do not rise any higher because, were they to rise higher, then the clouds, which are heavier, would themselves be higher above the earth. That is why the Generation of the Flood planned the Tower to rise above the height of the clouds.

And thus they made it so that the rain could not fall on them, and when the Bible uses the expression "with its top in heaven," you have here hyperbole.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where is the difference? For it is known that the Lunar Sphere is also a place of habitation, as is the Earthly Sphere.

It has already been learned through flying devices, in the form of a mast laid breadthwise across the earth, that the wind ascends from the earth; indeed all winds rise from the earth below. That is why I have written that Noah would not have gone on a boat to the middle of the Ocean because certainly there was no flood there.

Indeed what could be the object of a flood in the Ocean? Should he not have taken a boat and not the Ark? Moreover, at that time the shipwright's art was unknown; and there is a further difficulty that the Almighty would have commanded him to take a boat and not the Ark.

And even if we believe that the Ocean encompasses the world from end to end like a tube, and that on one side of the world are the three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe and on the other side the New World called America, the question arises how did Man reach the New World before the flood without boats? And if you say that before the flood men were not there, it follows that neither was the flood there, because it would have been without object. Where is the redundancy? Because if Scripture says that where no flood was is called "pure," then it follows that the New World is pure, since the flood did not fall in the New World.

But as I have written, so be it, namely: the flood flattened the earth so that while it lasted no wind at all could ascend from the earth, wherefore Noah could not have sailed a boat to the Atlantic Ocean since in the place where he was at the time of the flood there was no wind, and it is impossible to sail without wind and that is the explanation for my statement that the winds ascend from the earth below.

And the idea of the flying device was that the wind would blow into the mast and thus lift the thing higher and higher, so that it would not return to earth unless strong and heavy air in the immediate vicinity of the earth would press on the thing and force it downwards. Therefore engineers traveled in it, and by discharging gunpowder (known as *pulver*) with force in the firing barrel, propelled it higher and higher until they observed that it had reached the point from which it would not return to earth at all. No such device has ever been found on the earth, although according to the way of nature it should regain the earth by the shortest possible way. On this basis they judged that the device first rose above the thick and polluted atmosphere by the force of the gunpowder, and when it had reached that point, the gunpowder would prevent it from coming down.

Therefore, should it be possible to bring any flying vehicle above this layer of thick air, it would continue ascending on the wind till it reached the Lunar Sphere, because the wind would always be carrying it over and above; and the higher you go the stronger is the wind, and treatises have already been written about how to make such a vehicle to reach the Lunar Sphere.

But the principle is that the vehicle should pass out of the heavy air, and that is what the Generation of the Flood and the Tower of Babel were after. Also, they wanted to establish their habitation on the Lunar Sphere where they would be saved from the flood. That is what they hoped to achieve with their vessel. How could they raise their airship above this heavy air? That is why they planned to build the Tower of Babel so high that it would protrude above the air and from its top they would launch their vessel on its voyage to the Lunar Sphere.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ON THE HORIZON

FREUD AND THE ZOHAR

An Incident

DAVID BAKAN

SOME months ago I received a brief note, in German, from Chaim Bloch, the eminent student of Judaism, Cabbala, and Hasidism. He wrote that he had seen a review of my book, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition,* in the *Day-Journal,* and wanted to inform me that he had been acquired with Freud. He enclosed a clipping on himself from a biographical dictionary to let me know who he was. He asked me if he might have an opportunity to look at my book; although he could not read English, he might, with the help of his children, be able to get the meaning out of it.

I read Chaim Bloch's letter with some amount of excitement. In my book I had advanced the thesis that there were certain relationships between the development of psychoanalysis and the Jewish mystical tradition. But I had provided, in the book, little or no *direct* evidence of any such connections; indeed, I have several reservations concerning the importance of a direct connection, and especially of the importance of Freud's having had a *scholarly* interest in Jewish mysticism. Nevertheless I could not help but be very much interested—for, also in my book, I had mentioned the fact that Freud conversed on such matters with Chaim Bloch. It had not occurred to me that I might be able to communicate with the same Chaim Bloch.

DAVID BAKAN is professor of psychology at the University of Missouri and the author of *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Van Nostrand, 1958)—sections of which appeared as an article in our October 1958 issue under the title "Moses in the Thought of Freud." The episode here recounted is in the nature of an addendum to Professor Bakan's earlier work.

I immediately wrapped up a copy of my book and sent it to Bloch at his home address in New York. Since I was myself going to New York in several weeks, I wrote and asked if I might come and see him. He replied affirmatively, telling me that he had some information on Freud which I would find interesting.

I arrived at his home in the Bronx, carrying a tape recorder, in order to have a permanent record of the conversation. He did not let me use it, saying that his children would object because it reminds them too much of Nazis and that sort of thing. We spoke in Yiddish. He inquired about my background, especially the parts of Europe where my parents came from. Rapport was quickly established when he found out that I too was a *Galicianer.*

THEN he told me his tale. He had been closely associated with Joseph Bloch, one of the leaders of the fight against anti-Semitism in Vienna. Joseph Bloch (to whom he was not related) had been a kind of mentor to him, and had urged him to do a translation of the works of Chaim Vital, the 16th–17th century Cabbalist. He began the work, but somehow found the ideas of Chaim Vital not to his taste. Still, he kept working on it as long as Joseph Bloch was alive. When Joseph Bloch died, he abandoned the work.

But once he had a dream in which Joseph Bloch appeared to him, shook his finger in his face, and asked him why he did not bring the work on Chaim Vital to a close. He arose out of the dream and energized himself sufficiently to complete the task. Yet the ideas of Vital still seemed so unsavory to him that he could not bring himself to pub-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lish the book on his own responsibility. He therefore sought someone to write a foreword to it: in effect, he wished for someone to help him bear the responsibility for its publication. He approached Sigmund Freud.

Freud, said Chaim Bloch, was beside himself with excitement on reading the manuscript. "This is gold," Freud said, and asked why Chaim Vital's work had never been brought to his attention before. He agreed to write the foreword, and even volunteered assistance in getting the book published.

Then Freud turned to Bloch and told him he too had written a book on Judaism; and took out the manuscript of the *Moses and Monotheism.* Bloch was openly aghast. "Anti-Semites," he said, "accuse us of killing the founder of Christianity. Now a Jew adds that we also killed the founder of Judaism. You are digging a trap for the Jewish people." And, "Have you examined the birth records and death records of ancient Egypt and found conclusive evidence that Moses was an Egyptian and the Jews killed him?"*

Freud was incensed with Bloch and told him that he would have nothing further to do with him, and nothing to do with the work on Chaim Vital. Freud left the room in anger.

Bloch did not know what to do, he said. He was loath to leave at once for fear of appearing impolite, and so he stayed in the room. On the desk were both manuscripts, his on Vital, and Freud's on Moses, both having been written on the same kind of paper. The manuscripts were somewhat strewn. Bloch said that the *yetzer hara,* the evil impulse, spoke to him saying that it would be a completely "understandable" error if the two manuscripts became mixed up, and he took them away; and that would have been the end of *Moses and Monotheism.* But, he thought, if Freud should have a copy of the *Moses,* what would it avail?

The significant piece of information for me, however, was the following: while waiting, Bloch occupied himself by looking over Freud's books. In Freud's library was a large collection of Judaica (which is absent from the presumptive "Freud library" which is now housed in the library of the New York Psychiatric Institute). Among the books were a number of books on Cabbala in German, and, most importantly, a copy of the French translation of the *Zohar!*

In my book on Freud, I give considerable attention to the *Zohar,* since this is without question the most important work in the Jewish mystical tradition. A number of features in the *Zohar* strongly suggest relationship to the psychoanalytic movement—among them the concept of man's bisexuality, and concepts of sexuality in general. There is also in the *Zohar* the notion that man can be studied by the exegetical techniques associated with the study of Torah; and a theory of the nature of anti-Semitism almost identical with that contained in Freud's *Moses and Monotheism.* Perhaps even more important, there is an atmospheric similarity—one which cannot, indeed, be conveyed in any brief description.

Although I had felt it was very probable that Freud had had some contact with the *Zohar,* I did not wish to assert this without some actual supporting data. As a matter of fact, I even wrote in the Preface: "Our attempt to understand Freud in terms of Jewish history should not be taken as indicating that we believe Freud to have been a secret scholar of Jewish lore. An image of him poring over Cabbalistic books in the dead of night is not supported by the facts; although to have done this would not have been inconsistent with the patterns of the Jewish mystical leaders."

This new bit of information from Chaim Bloch has made me wonder. Freud did indeed know of the *Zohar,* and his connection with Jewish mysticism may thus have had a scholarly feature.

* Bloch has published parts of this interview: "An Encounter with Freud," *Bitzaron,* November 1950.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STUDY OF MAN

DEMOCRACY AND REVOLUTION

A Commentary on Some Recent Publications

OSCAR GASS

The Counterrevolutionary Tradition

THE traditional counterrevolutionary assessment of the aims and methods of the French Revolution is dominated by two thoughts: the Revolution came about through allegiance to abstract ideas; the Revolution was due to the willful acts of evil men. The root is one. Lucifer, said Edmund Burke, was the first father of Jacobins: the Revolution was a free election of evil. The lie in the heart of the revolutionary is arrogance, overweening pride. The creature confuses himself with the Creator. This is the sin against the Spirit that cannot be forgiven. Inordinate pride corrupts the revolutionary generally, but the blindness of pride shows itself especially in excessive esteem for man's intellect. The revolutionary overrates human ability to create institutions through deliberate choice and reasoned action. Creation is the work of God and History.

In wayward unconcern, the revolutionary puts the ax to the roots of man's social and cultural being. He is scornful of emotion and habit, impatient of genuine variety and individuality, unrecognizing of the moral obligations discharged by traditional institutions. He lacks the wisdom to comprehend the logic of history—the slow, never-repeated development of societies and cultures through experience. Rashly, the revolutionary formulates abstract principles and then presumes, by the standard of these abstractions, to pass judgment on historic faith, custom, and law. Deluded by "political messianism" (to adopt the language of Professor J. L. Talmon), the revolutionary formulates a program with the aim of (again following Talmon) ". . . total renovation . . . the idea of a society reconstructed deliberately with a view to a logical and final pattern." Whatever does not suit his abstract principles, he consigns to the rubbish heap. And these principles range wide —Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Justice, Popular Sovereignty. As the ideas are abstract, so their application must be uncompromising. Interests and desires may be compromised but never principles! Whoever violates a principle is to be denounced, harried, guillotined. The apostles of abstract ideas are the men of blood.

All this was substantially complete in 1797, when Burke died. Joseph de Maistre gave it a French tongue, Friedrich von Savigny a German one. The former contributed his gifts of imagination and literary expression, the latter a patina of scholarship. Burke towers above them both. He had qualities of imagination and judgment that imposed restraints on the articulating of inadequate basic ideas into elaborately structured absurdities. Particularly as a young man, before partisanship and oratory gained full dominion over his personality, he was capable of thoughtful skepticism and indecision, as when he wrote, "Perhaps the bottom of most things is unintelligible; and our surest reasoning when we come to a certain point is involved not only in obscurity but contradiction." This is no mere denigration of reason for the purpose of exalting some catchpenny faith or authority. Burke always lacked sectarian rigor; he leavened his errors with inconsistency.

The American branch of the counterrevolutionary tradition had to shoulder a burden from which its British and Continental affiliates were

---

OSCAR GASS, a consulting economist in private practice in Washington, D. C., has had several previous articles in COMMENTARY, most recently "Must the West Depend on Mideast Oil?" in our July 1959 number.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

free. It had to rescue the good name of what schoolbooks choose to call the American Revolution. Maistre united Washington and Robespierre in equal condemnation. Burke lost interest in the American colonies once they had left the British Empire. But Americans who shared the traditional counterrevolutionary outlook had a much harder problem. What were they to do about Washington and Franklin even if they could do without Jefferson and Madison? Recently they have solved that problem, to the satisfaction of both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Knights of Columbus. They have found that, properly speaking, there never was an American revolution. In the words of one recent American historian,* it was only a short disturbance, quite "without dogma," a "conservative colonial rebellion," with its major issue "a pretty technical legal problem." Other American historians† have joined in rejoicing that, with those events of 1761–82 put in perspective, as not a *real* revolution at all, ". . . American democracy . . . [appears as] . . . a majestic creation of the ages and the citadel of prescriptive right in Western Christendom." This American historical scholarship is perhaps of a character to stimulate, in some, a generous appreciation for the short, blunt phrase of Henry Ford, "History is bunk." But it is, at least, a special kind of bunk, where a politician's slogan can be mistaken for the linchpin of the universe.

The Atlantic Revolution, 1760–1800

To those whose esteem for historical writing may have been shaken but not irretrievably shattered, the new treatise** by Professor R. R. Palmer holds out encouragement. On the general subject of the political revolutions of Europe and America in the closing decades of the 18th century, it is already, in this first volume, the most considerable treatment that has been written by an American. Among books in English, on both sides of the water, there is nothing that bears comparison with it until we go back to the *Lectures on the French Revolution* that Lord Acton delivered some sixty years ago. What have we gained through six decades of research?

First, Palmer clarifies the extent to which the Western world, on both sides of the Atlantic and up to the Russian frontier, was one great society. Every country differed from all others enough so that sufficiently myopic eyes can fasten on uniqueness and make a romantic story of it. Before the polarization achieved by revolution and war, there were certainly not the same two parties everywhere; there were many. Yet most parties had reasonable facsimiles in other countries. Men debated similar political and social issues and found it not incongruous to do so in the same political language—with only the ordinary human margin of ambiguity and misunderstanding. Lord Acton knew the close tie between the American and French Revolutions, but he did not draw a political and social map of all Europe before and during the Revolution. This Professor Palmer does, selectively but skillfully. His telescope reaches Geneva, Sweden, Poland, and the Hapsburg lands, as well as more familiar scenes in America, Britain and France. He raises himself on decades of other men's scholarship, and we see the more clearly for it.

Second, Palmer is able to give a more meaningful account than Acton could of economic interests, social allegiances, and institutional factors in political action. In this again, Palmer is the heir of decades of other men's studies, notably those inspired in France by Jean Jaurès, Albert Mathiez, and Georges Lefebvre. But if this research has aided our comprehension of particular events, we must not exaggerate the novelty of the general views to which it leads. They are more complex than Marx. It has long been known that the French urban poor were moved by hunger and followed men who promised to relieve it. It has also long been known that ownership of property as well as access to political power was, in various ways, at issue in the French Revolution. Acton wrote: "The assault on the restricted distribution of power involved an assault on the concentration of wealth. The connection of the two ideas is the secret motive of the Revolution." Acton understood the extent to which various bourgeois elements were able to make themselves the leaders of a nation united against its Privileged Orders. Potential cleavages between political and economic democracy were only dimly perceived. Socialism was not yet born.

Both Acton and Palmer see the original mo-

* Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics,* chapter III.

† R. J. S. Hoffman and P. Levack, *Burke's Politics,* Introduction, p. XXXV.

** *The Age of the Democratic Revolution. A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800* (Vol. I), Princeton University Press, 534 pp., $7.50.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive of that age of revolutions in fundamental conflicts over the elimination of hereditary, arbitrary privilege. What is arbitrary? All Western Europe—though not Russia—was prepared to move away from the feudal identification of property with jurisdiction. But should not a mother country, through crown or parliament, in some degree, control the affairs of its colonies? The aristocracy of France was prepared, by July 1789, to submit to equal taxation of its property and income. But should civil and miltary office be thrown open to all, without distinction of birth? Should an elected legislature be able to establish law and public policy, against the dissent of its aristocracy and king? Is it right that all vote, because all stake their lives in the body politic, or does possession of property alone constitute a stake adequate to entitle one to vote? Is inherited property also an arbitrary privilege, or is it a necessary incentive to effort and the indispensable armor of personality? Should governments be centralized, to bring the national genius and national standards to bear on the whole country, or decentralized to adjust to local variety and foster local initiative? In what degree should churches be established by law and supported from public funds? On these issues, men divided profoundly and, when they despaired of persuading, they fought.

The historian at the end of the 19th century was not behind the historian of 1959 in emphasizing the fundamental character of the conflicts that led to civil war, royalist invasion, and revolutionary imperialism. Acton said: "In the violent contradiction between the new order of things in France and the inorganic world around it, conflict was irrepressible. Between French principles and European practice there could be neither conciliation nor confidence. Each was a constant menace to the other, and the explosion of enmity could only be restrained by unusual wisdom and policy." (Note that it is the old society that is condemned as "inorganic"; such words are stones that anyone can throw—in any direction.) But Palmer goes much farther. Acton was an advocate of balanced, limited constitutionalism, of an Anglo-Saxon model, and he saw the tragedy of the French Revolution as consisting in the inability of France to absorb and adapt Anglo-Saxon political experience. In a few decisive pages, Palmer rejects all this. Given the character of the French aristocracy, there was no place for an upper chamber. Given the character of the French monarchy, there could not be a strong executive independent of the legislature. There was no reason for federalism. Monarchy and aristocracy had to be fought; they could not be conciliated. "If the French were to carry out the principles that they shared with Americans and with men elsewhere in Europe . . . they would have to do so by concentrating sovereign power . . . in a single assembly. . . . They would have to take account of the wishes of peasants and workers; the Revolution . . . [could not] be only a revolution of respectable men. . . . Moderate revolution was eminently desirable, but it was not one of the possible choices."

So the political debate is opened again, as it should be. Otherwise the historian abdicates even the limited contribution he can make to any general enlargement of understanding. Acton's shall be, in this, the last words: "If we submit ourselves to the event, if we think more of the accomplished deed than of the suggested problem, we become servile accomplices of success and force." But to write history properly is—in some measure—to resurrect; it is to create an awareness of meaningful alternatives; it is to relive—in some degree—the reality of choice. Professor Palmer has done the work of a historian.

The Revolutionary Crowd in France, 1787–95

In the tragedy of revolution, as conceived by the counterrevolutionary tradition, there are scenes of crisis when the furies take over. These are the terror-filled days ruled by "the mob." Burke, as always, set the tone. In his rapt imagination, the crowd of women bringing the royal family to Paris from Versailles consists of ". . . the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abased shape of the vilest of women," and their male associates are ". . . a band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with . . . blood." It took nearly a century, the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871, and another self-conscious exponent of the wisdom of history to surpass Burke's invective. In the 1870's, Hippolyte Taine, taking his stand against the revolutionary madmen who would refashion society by intention and design, achieved a richness of expletives that might have astounded even Burke. For Taine, the revolutionary crowds of 1789–90 are, first of all, brigands and bandits, then smugglers, forgers, vagabonds, beggars, fugitives from justice, foreigners, men with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hideous faces, loose women, the lowest dregs of society.

Contemporary witnesses understood that the crowds of the French Revolution were quite differently composed than Burke or Taine imagined. The crowds also had objectives more specifically related to the particular problems of their day than a general appetite for destruction or a vague aspiration to usher in the reign of the messiah. But it was not until 1932 that Professor Georges Lefebvre, in a thoughtful essay entitled *Revolutionary Crowds,* posed the problem in a way that has been productive for historical investigation. It has taken another quarter century for Lefebvre's suggestions to yield substantial studies. In France, the leading figure in these studies is Albert Soboul, but we now have also, in English, an extremely valuable book* from the same collaboration.

Mr. Rudé does not confuse historical investigation with the totality of knowledge, and he does not attempt to insinuate a political doctrine under the guise of an historical explanation. Yet even the eleven small pages of his Appendices, in which he tabulates the participants in various revolutionary crowds, contribute more to our understanding of the French Revolution than do most many-volumed histories. He finds the revolutionary crowds characteristically composed quite differently from the National Assembly or the Jacobin Club. There the dominant elements were the professions, the commercial class, and, in early days, the liberal aristocracy. The crowds are predominantly a cut lower: small shopkeepers, workshop masters, individual craftsmen, wage earners, and women without hats. The wage laborer is always in a minority, and it is only rarely that he comes out to demonstrate for wage demands. More frequently he is led into crowd action by his employer. There is some looting, but it is by no means universal. The crowd itself sometimes takes summary action against mere pilfering.

Most often the crowd is moved to action by its need for bread, by high prices and scarce supplies. Robespierre and his colleagues of the Mountain enjoyed the support of the crowd when they were associated with a successful policy of price control and assured rations. They lost what was to Robespierre personally perhaps a decisive element in popular support when they sponsored wage control—and wage reductions. Political ideas came to the crowd, for the most part, from that middle-class leadership which dominated the National Assembly and the Clubs. The crowd also took a hand repeatedly in shifting dominance from one middle class leadership to another—and never without an admixture of its own distinctive objectives. But it would be vain, as it is necessarily inaccurate, to attempt to summarize, in a page, all the content of Rudé's rich little volume. It deserves to be read.

What Rudé warns against most (and in this explicitly rejecting the position of Professor Talmon) is the view that the course of the revolution can be understood as determined by the impact on leaders or followers of abstract ideas, "political messianism," and plans for "total renovation." On the contrary, ". . . the revolutionary leaders themselves, though steeped in the ideas of the new philosophy, relied upon precedent and, far from following a consistent program of total renovation, stumbled from one political expedient to another—in which process the exigencies of war, the needs of social conciliation, and the absence of any traditions of political experience all played their part."

The violence and injustice are not gone. There is plenty of innocent blood—as elsewhere in the past and present. The soundest judgment is perhaps again that of Acton. "The Revolution will never be intelligibly known to us until we discover its conformity to the common law, and recognize that it is not utterly singular and exceptional, that other scenes have been as horrible as these, and many men as bad."

Edmund Burke and the Counterrevolutionary Tradition

The contrary idea, that no other scenes of human history have been as horrible as those of the French Revolution and no other men as bad, was Edmund Burke's most gross bequest to his followers. In 1796, he was still writing about those ". . . nefarious monsters [who] destroyed their country for what was good in it . . . parricides of their country, called the revolutionists, and constitutionalists, of France; a species of traitors, of whose fury and atrocious wickedness nothing in the annals of the frenzy and depravation of mankind had before furnished an example. . . ."

Burke was himself no stranger to frenzy, as both the evidence of his contemporaries and the corpus of his literary remains abundantly testify. On his emotional and imaginative person-

* George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution,* Oxford University Press, 239 pp., $5.60.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ality, there have recently been several books. Interesting to specialists is the first volume* of a new, scholarly edition of his correspondence. Of less service is the curious book† by Mr. P. J. Stanlis; it adds to the documentation of American academic politics in the 20th century more than to our understanding of the 18th. Of substantial value is the extended political biography** by Professor Carl B. Cone; it does not plumb Burke's lows or scale his highs, but works quietly with the integrating theme of the dominance in Burke of the active party politician.

Burke's mind was rhetorical rather than philosophical. No great name has left us more bombast. He can invoke Nature or God at convenience, to lend authority to a commonplace, to round a paragraph or fill a peroration. I suggest that anyone who fails to see this unphilosophical character of Burke's mind, at first glance, try the following exercise. Place any volume of Burke's next to Henry Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics.* Then turn to Sidgwick's pages 80 to 83, in which the author works with the thesis that the idea of action according to Nature provides no criterion of right conduct. Now turn to Burke and compare those pages with anything to be found in all of Burke's writings. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that, in Burke, we are not reading a thinker really grappling with problems that are difficult for him too, and to which he is giving his best thought; we are following a speaker, or man of letters, who has found an occasion to make brilliant remarks, to display his command of language, or to defend a partisan cause.

The legend of Burke's political wisdom dies hard. Yet he failed to understand, and grapple with, every major political problem of his time. Professor Alfred Cobban well said of Burke's politics, ". . . as a working system it was dead before it was expounded." He has written something of weight on the theory of political parties, but he gave the best years of his life, not to any broad party affiliation, but to the trivial faction of the Rockingham Whigs. He met the enlarged demands of the common man with total denial, worship of hereditary political privilege, and fierce defense of the absolute rights of property and contract. He makes a parade of religion, but his was the coarse Christianity that has no difficulty in distinguishing between justice and charity. To concern over the concentration of wealth, he replied ". . . the monopoly of capital is . . . a great benefit, and a benefit particularly to the poor." Opposing protection of farm labor he wrote ". . . in the case of the farmer and the laborer, their interests are always the same, and it is absolutely impossible that their free contracts can be onerous to either party." Against a proposal to limit profits, he advanced the authority of Heaven: "But who are to judge what [the employer's] profit and advantage ought to be? Certainly no authority on earth." He was no mere traditionalist where the claims of property were involved; he attacked traditional taxation for poor relief as an offense against Nature. He was involved in the affairs of India at several stages in his career, but few would now contend that he made any constructive contribution to Indian affairs. His sympathy for the aspirations of America and Ireland was quite limited, and he never conceded anything to their demands for self-government. On the contrary, his program was the permanent retention of the right of a British Parliament, dominated by a hereditary aristocracy, to "bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever." The more closely we study his career, the less we are inclined to admit his title to be regarded as a considerable statesman.

BURKE has been much appreciated by professional historians. They have thought he gave due importance to their kind of knowledge. But he had not the temper of a great historian. His human sympathies were not wide, and he allowed emotional storms to destroy his balance of judgment. Lecky, who saw in Burke the greatest of British political thinkers, wrote of ". . . paroxysms of passion which indicated a mind profoundly and radically diseased." Burke never made a controlled, serious effort to understand an enemy—whether he was named Maximilien Robespierre or Warren Hastings. He was of those who study the past primarily to deify the present. Above all, he lived in a little universe, where God had labored mightily to create the Constitution of Great Britain. If we are in search of a great conservative historian, we had better turn our eyes to Tocqueville—no friend of mere innovation and more religious than Burke. Tocqueville could write: ". . . the more I study the world as it was, and the more I see in detail of the world as we have it today, the

* T. W. Copeland, (ed.), *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke* (Vol. I), University of Chicago Press, 375 pp., $8.00.

† *Edmund Burke and the Natural Law,* University of Michigan Press, 311 pp., $5.75.

** *Burke and the Nature of Politics* (Vol. I), University of Kentucky Press, 415 pp., $9.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more I am impressed by the incredible differences one finds not only in the laws, but in the principles behind the laws . . . and I can well believe that what we call necessary institutions are often only customary institutions, and that . . . the field of possibilities is much wider than the men who live in the bonds of any one particular social organization are able to imagine." Burke could not have written that.

Noblesse oblige. Much is pardoned an aristocracy that displays generosity. But Burke was not a generous man. His moral sensitivity was also not above the commonplace. His leading Parliamentary role in matters concerning India went hand in hand with personal and family speculations in East India stock and compensated representation of particular Indian interests. He denounced every sort of "placeman" named by the King but saw nothing wrong in taking £30,000 (about $750,000 in today's values, according to Professor Cone) from Lord Rockingham for political services to the Rockingham Whigs. His conduct of the Warren Hastings prosecution had every element of McCarthyism except the television camera. Of Irish birth, his most active campaign regarding Ireland was to set aside a threatened tax on absentee landlords living out of Ireland; five such landlords, who had annual Irish rentals of £66,000 (say $1,650,000), were among his sponsors, and they met the bills of the campaign. The limits of his religious tolerance were those of Robespierre; atheists are never to be tolerated. Marxians have been quite wrongly credited with introducing intemperate manners and extreme language into European politics; they could go to school with Burke.

And, above all, there is the question of blood. Even before the deposition of the King, Burke had proclaimed: "If ever a foreign prince enters into France, he must enter it as into a country of assassins. The mode of civilized war will not be practiced; nor are the French, who act on the present system, entitled to expect it." Hitler invented nothing. Here a century and a half before World War II, Burke enunciates the full doctrine of the *Untermensch,* who has no claim to consideration as a human. It appears that the rude men of blood are to be found not only under the banners of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and not only among the advocates of totalitarian democracy. They seem comfortable also under the banners of God, King, and Country, and among the advocates of no kind of democracy at all.

Art reaches for style, thought for system, both for adequacy to the subject. Burke achieved style. His speech and writing convey the personality—emotional, imaginative, intellectually inventive, often uncontrolled, sometimes wildly partisan, occasionally feverishly disordered. His thought contains limited systematizing structures, rather than true hard-earned coherence. First comes the directing hand of Providence and, immediately derivative, the binding authority of Natural Law. Contemporary Roman Catholic scholars have particularly emphasized this first level in Burke's thinking. But it is only the conventional preamble for Burke. It was a minor oversight when Gierke omitted Burke entirely from the history of *Natural Law and the Theory of Society.*

A SECOND, interwoven strand in Burke's thinking might be called the traditional utilitarian. This appeals to "expediency" or utility against all that it chooses to call abstract ideas, and it will not stay for an answer when asked, "Expedient for what?" or "Useful to what end?" It prides itself on operating with a "political reason" that can weigh, measure, and decide without asking such questions. The Victorians (Lecky, Stephen, Morley) valued this second element in Burke's thinking to such a degree that they seem sometimes hardly to distinguish Burke from Bentham. The distinguishing mark lies in the guide to expediency or utility. This is the third, most characteristic, level of Burke's mind (though not one to which he adheres at at times).

But how are we to know what is expedient? From "prejudice" and "prescription," Burke answers. These are the safe guides. Providence works through nature and history. The collective wisdom of mankind is embodied in established views and established institutions. The individual mind, however keen, is less worthy of reliance. Take care! If we allow our questions to drive too deep, we shall find no peace. We shall attain no generally accepted answers, but we shall destroy the foundations on which we stand.

Burke has been charged with being the proponent of casual compromise and unfinished thought, who urges the differences in every situation and every problem and shrinks from the common denominator and the underlying principle. In his best mind, he might have accepted the charge. For him, the roots of morality and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

government are too tender and obscure for harsh light and rough debate. Let government stand on traditional Majesty and Power, property on Prejudice and Prescription. Choice and consent are foundations too variable and fragile. The social contract cannot wisely be denounced and formed again each day. Better that it should be conceived as the eternal chain of the dead, the living and the unborn. In like spirit, Walter Bagehot will emphasize, two generations later, that stability in government and business depends on "deference" and "confidence." Without these forces of stability, an orderly daily life becomes impossible, alike in Whitehall and in Lombard Street.

Appreciation of the great customary stabilizers is very far from the whole of a moral or political philosophy. It is equally far from the whole requirements of moral and political conduct. But it is surely an appreciation worth learning. Burke and his followers have helped us to learn that lesson.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS FROM READERS

The Kibbutzim

To the Editor of Commentary:

Gerda L. Cohen's article in the October issue, "The 'Affluent' Kibbutzim," touches on many problems, but with a superficial, slanted journalese.

From the first paragraph onward an angry, bitter mood is sustained. "An odor of stale milk stifled the pungency of eucalyptus. . . . A tangle of Dagania children were fighting. . . . Her [Miriam Baratz's] chin was a chunk of fumed oak." At the end of the fifth paragraph my image of kibbutz life in the Jordan valley is one buzzing with flies, covered in sawdust, smelling of stale milk, and peopled by old-timers living in "boiled pink concrete blocks." One of Miss Cohen's subjects, "Rachel. . .wore shorts and a permanent air of disapproval." It is Miss Cohen, I believe, who wears a permanent air of disapproval which spoils, for me, the validity and sensitivity of some of her observations.

One cannot argue with the statement of the problems: the lack of manpower in the kibbutz, the dissatisfaction of the woman, the pressures upon the creative artist, loss of strength through political splits, etc. But one can expect the article to present the facts with greater objectivity. . . . I am led to point out, for instance, that one can find "boiled pink concrete blocks" in many housing projects in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Perhaps Israeli builders prefer this material; it is not indigenous to the kibbutz. Neither are poliitcal splits. Radical political movements have always been weakened by splits and splinter groups—has there ever been a cooperative movement with full ideological commitment which has lasted as long as the kibbutz movement? Did Miss Cohen spend any time with the third-generation kibbutz children? They don't have the conflicts their grandmothers had about collective education.

Many other points might be made to counteract Miss Cohen's limited views. . . . I find one marked deficiency in the whole article. This is the absence of the observation of pride, the basic, deep pride kibbutz members feel in their works: the orchards, the fields, the buildings, the children.

Only in the last few paragraphs of the article do I sense a note of respect for the kibbutz itself. The author visited Kibbutz Ein Gedi on the shores of the Dead Sea. But: "The men, monosyllabic and grandly mustachioed, prove their education thorough, by toiling at 107.6° fifty-four hours a week. They take pride in nothing except a tomato crop out of season. . . ." Those men take pride in their existence in that miserable spot, in the simple fact that they get up six mornings a week to work under that sun to produce a tomato crop out of the salt-caked soil. They take pride in having a cellist with them who can play on the shore of the Dead Sea at night, and they are pleased with the fresh sweet roses they have to put on the tables Friday night. Here Miss Cohen intimates they might thank the Lord as they light their candles. Perhaps that is her preference, but these people don't feel the necessity to thank anyone. They are doing this all themselves.

Marilyn Winograd

Chicago, Illinois

"The Way It Was"

To the Editor of Commentary:

Never have I observed a critic abdicate so absolutely his editorial responsibility as did Mr. Henry Popkin in his report (October) on Mr. Harold Loeb's wholly delightful book, *The Way It Was*. . . . Mr. Popkin seems to have substituted some queer kind of emotional prejudice for the critical integrity we have a right to expect from professional reviewers. He seems to have dedicated himself exclusively to representing the book as (in his own words) a "Portrait of the Artist as a Shlimazl," at whatever cost to the truth as found in the text. . . .

In two short pages, I was able to count seventeen misstatements and distortions. To cite a few:

1. Mr. Popkin states that Mr. Loeb decided one day to become a man of letters because he "liked the company of writers." On the contrary, the narrative clearly indicates Mr. Loeb's purpose to become a writer ever since his childhood and that he had worked in that direction even before he had ever met a writer.

2. Mr. Popkin asserts that Gordon Craig put Mr. Loeb in the "inferior category of work people." The text discloses quite the opposite.

3. Mr. Popkin states that "from the first" Mr. Loeb "had harbored profound suspicion of his 'arty' friends." The book shows that, "from the first," Mr. Loeb had gone overboard for his arty friends. It was good reporting and good

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

narrative for Mr. Loeb to have disclosed the sad finding that they too sometimes had feet of clay.

4. Mr. Popkin suggests that Mr. Loeb was "not very happy as an editor." Other, more dispassionate critics reported that the book was suffused with a kind of "exhilaration." Mr. Loeb seemed to be saying that he had never been happier than during the years he edited *Broom*.

Most of Mr. Popkin's adverse criticisms have the quality of piddling barbs. It seems a cheap way to dispose of a book which is an important addition to the literature of an important literary period and which sheds so much light on *The Way It Was*.

CHARLES BONNER

New York City

MR. POPKIN *writes:*

I am not entirely sure just what the trouble is with Mr. Bonner. I can, however, reply to his points about Mr. Loeb's book and my review of it.

1. Mr. Loeb gives more than one reason for his literary ambitions; I think I am therefore entitled to take the one I find "mainly" valid. On page 31, Mr. Loeb writes: "I did not want to go back to business and devote my life to making money. I wanted to throw in my lot with such writers, painters, sculptors, poets, dancers, harpists, and crackpots as Mary Clarke had gathered about her." Page 10: "Disdainful of the rich and powerful, I was seeking and finding strength and beauty among the sensitive poor.". . . Page 30: "I did not limit my contact with this alluring world to week-end visits." He extended his contact by frequenting the Sunwise Turn bookstore for "good reading, good conversation, and lively minds." And, much later in the book, at a time when he is considering a break with the literary life, Mr. Loeb writes: "They [writers] were in my opinion the only people fit to associate with."

It is less easy to demonstrate that Mr. Loeb was moved by a burning desire to write. Certainly one is entitled to doubt the force of this ambition in a novelist who encouraged himself by saying: "Anyone can write a novel."

2. On page 94, Mr. Loeb tells how he discovered some letters from Craig to Kreymborg. In one letter, Craig tells how to cajole "work people" into doing more work. In the second letter, Craig gives similar directions for cajoling Mr. Loeb. This evidence suggests that Craig put Mr. Loeb into the category of "work people," rather than artists. I preferred this descriptive category to a more abusive term, "dullard," which word Mr. Loeb uses to convey Craig's apparent conception of him.

3. On "profound suspicion," I followed my statement with two early instances of Mr. Loeb's doubts. If more are wanted, back in the days of the bookstore (page 35): "And it wasn't long before my initial enthusiasm for Mary Clarke and her theories began to wear thin in spots." This attitude is more fully explained in the sentences that follow. Still back in the bookstore days, a broken marriage "disillusioned" Mr. Loeb and persuaded him that artists needed "something positive" (page 55). Before starting *Broom*, Mr. Loeb "had become more than a little fed up with those who spelled art with a capital A" (page 66).

4. I said that Mr. Loeb "suggests that he was not very happy as an editor," and found the suggestion in a particular statement: "Most of what was being written was not good." When a magazine editor makes a statement like that, it hardly suggests delirious joy. . . .

The Human Condition

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Golffing in his article ("The American and European Minds Compared") in December's COMMENTARY attempts to illustrate his major thesis, a critique of American thought, by choosing as a contemporary illustration one small review of mine which appeared in the June issue. Surely such a broad thesis calls for a more extensive repertoire of illustration. It is a pity that a small sampling of mine should be forced to bear the burden of such a weighty construction.

I do not know whether Mr. Golffing classes himself as an American or a European writer, but in his attack upon me he resorts to the international exercise of diverting attention from the words and arguments to the motives of the writer. It is for this reason that I am obliged to reply.

If, unlike Mr. Golffing, you read the words of my review and avoid the hypothetical motives ascribed to me, you will see that I did NOT:

1. Say that Miss Arendt derived from Hegel.

2. "Suggest strongly," or for that matter, weakly, or in any other way, "that every attempt at synthesizing what the individual disciplines have discovered about our society is not only foolish but fraudulent."

3. Say or suggest that the workings and activities of a thing are opposed to its nature, nor say or imply that society either has or hasn't a nature. (How can he possibly tell from my review as it appeared in COMMENTARY what I think on the subject?)

4. "Drag in Hegel as the archetypal whipping boy of enlightened empiricism." And his later statement is impossible; it never happened. A resemblance in style is not a responsibility in fact.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

5. Begrudge Miss Arendt the right to worry about the future of the human race; nor did I say a concern for the future of mankind is either "cultural pessimism" or "Spenglerian."

I *said* Miss Arendt's manner of treatment was at fault only after I had proved many of its weaknesses. Mr. Golffing distorts by taking some final conclusions out of the earlier context of my proof and completely misinterpreting them. I cannot possibly answer misrepresentations of points I never made.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Golffing asserts rather too much without any proof at all. He says Miss Arendt's triad, "Labor," "Work," and "Action" is perfectly acceptable. Why and by what criteria? And perfectly acceptable to whom? Others beside myself did not find them so. And they are far from self-evident truths.

He seems to think—and this is one mark of a cultist—that if one dislikes Miss Arendt's book, one dislikes all greatness since the world began. It may be a bit of "feudal" deductive logic, coming from an American, but this does not follow. I do not dislike Goethe, Gide, the *New Statesman,* Shakespeare, Plato and Aristotle, Leibniz and Hobbes, John Osborne and Kingsley Amis nor am I insensible to the plural meanings in Dante.

My review simply subjected Miss Arendt's book to one of the traditional European disciplines—Logic. And may I suggest that one of the great intellectual beauties of so many European treatises was the exquisite precision of the detail from which the whole took shape.

In his final paragraph where Mr. Golffing, to use his own language of motive, works himself up into a fury of insinuating denunciation of me, he says, "I should be very much mistaken if his [Reis's] real business were not to kill . . . that hydra-headed lust for speculative analysis, etc."

The conclusion is simple. Mr. Golffing *is* very much mistaken both in method and subject matter.

LINCOLN REIS

New York City

MR. GOLFFING *writes:*

My references to Mr. Reis's review occupy but a small space in my article and are in a sense extrinsic to it; as illustration is, in a sense, extrinsic to argument. I do not believe that my argument stands or falls by the weight of that illustration. This does not mean that I did not weigh my words, or his. Certainly I attended as much to the drift of Mr. Reis's rhetoric—and as far as specific statements are concerned, to their vocabulary and overtones—as to what he has stated overtly.

Mr. Reis seems to forget that all illustration other than direct quotation is representation, and all representation, from the point of view of the purist, misrepresentation—forever and inevitably.

Put in another way, I have taken the license, commonly granted to all writers, of interpreting a text according to my lights. If I misinterpreted Mr. Reis's language, which seemed then—and still seems—intemperate and invidious to me, I obviously committed a blunder. Of course I am as convinced of the correctness of my characterization as Mr. Reis is of the objective tenor of his own remarks.

I did not impute to Mr. Reis a chauvinistic rejection of all things European. As for his charge of "cultism," this is so patently absurd that it hardly deserves to be refuted. I made it abundantly clear in my essay that I consider Miss Arendt's book faulty in many ways and nowhere did I say that it—or its author—achieves greatness.

Correction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the article by Harry Gersh and Sam Miller, "Satmar in Brooklyn," in your November issue, there was one gross misstatement.

For the record: I have never attended, much less addressed, any meeting or rally organized by the Satmar group. I was not even in New York City when, according to a report in the *Jewish Morning Journal,* I had allegedly spoken at such a "protest meeting.". . .

[Rabbi] SIMON SCHWAB

New York City

MR. MILLER *writes:*

My source for this information was not the *Morning Journal,* but the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's daily news bulletin of September 13, 1956. This item—reporting a Union Square meeting sponsored by the National Committee for Freedom of Religion in Israel, and allegedly addressed by Rabbi Schwab and others—was subsequently picked up by a number of newspapers: without denial, to the best of my knowledge.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS IN REVIEW

WHAT TOYNBEE KNOWS BEST*

MAURICE COHEN

After many years, the universal historian Arnold Toynbee has given us a book-length work on the particular civilization in which he has been especially interested all his life. *Hellenism* is, accordingly, an important book for those concerned with Toynbee's larger work. In it Toynbee attempts both to survey the history of Greece and Rome, using the categories of *A Study of History,* and to present a moral for our own time. His conclusion is that: "In the field of politics, a revival of the Hellenic worship of idolized local states is, today, the dominant religion of the West. . . . The tragic history of the Hellenic world shows that this Hellenic form of idolatry is a ghost of Hellenism that we harbor at our peril. The modern world must exorcise this demon resolutely if it is to save itself from meeting with its Hellenic predecessor's fate."

Underlying this worship of collective human power, according to Toynbee, is a deeper error, man's worship of himself, which Toynbee calls "Humanism"; his historical diagnosis is that Hellenic civilization floundered because of pride, the Greeks of the 5th century B.C.E. having tainted all of subsequent Hellenic history by sinning against the transcendent in their moment of greatest secular triumph.

As particular exponents of humanism in 5th-century Greece, Toynbee singles out the Sophists, and especially Protagoras, author of the famous saying, "Man is the measure of all things." But although there is some resemblance between the Sophists' revolt against traditional Greek morality and the spirit of certain writers of the Italian Renaissance, in the case of the Sophists we certainly cannot talk of humanism in the strictest sense, implying advocacy of a specific, primarily literary, educational program. On the contrary, we have, as evidence of the Sophists' revolt against the traditional literary education of their time, skeptical statements, suggestions of the relativity of knowledge and morals, and rationalistic explanations of religious belief; and it is just this kind of material that has encouraged earlier writers to talk vaguely about the humanism of the Sophists. Toynbee, however, means by "humanism" something quite different: he insists that there was a *religion* of humanism among the Greeks of the 5th century B.C.E.: ". . . the Hellenes saw in Man 'the Lord of Creation' and worshipped him as an idol in the place of God. . . . What distinguishes the Hellenic experiment in Humanism is that it was the most whole-hearted and uncompromising practice of man-worship that is on record up to date." Where is the evidence for the existence of such worship? In the fragmentary texts of the Sophists that we possess, there are no injunctions to adore man, and even Protagoras's dictum, of which Toynbee makes much, is generally interpreted as an epistemological statement, a denial in Heraclitean terms of the possibility of objective knowledge. Presumably as an additional piece of evidence, Toynbee uses as an epigraph the first line of the ode on man from Sophocles' *Antigone,* but the poem is not a "humanistic" utterance even by Toynbee's odd definition. Unfortunately, the Greekless reader cannot judge for himself from the quotation, since Toynbee uses one of Gilbert Murray's most arbitrary translations.* Nor does he tell us that the ode concludes with a reminder of the dangers to which man is subject, and that, far from being a declaration of unadulterated "humanism," the poem is quite orthodox in its fear of *hybris.*

The only texts, then, which Toynbee seems

* A review of *Hellenism,* by Arnold J. Toynbee, Oxford, 272 pp., $4.50.

* The Greek says simply: "There are many strange things but none stranger than man." Toynbee uses Murray's translation: "Wonders are many, but none there be so strange, so fell as the Child of Man."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

able to provide in support of his central assertion that the Greeks worshiped man are Protagoras' epistemological dictum and Sophocles' poem on the dangers of pride; these and these alone comprise the documentary evidence in *Hellenism* of a supposed Greek religion of humanism. There is, indeed, no other evidence of any religious worship of Man among the Greeks. There are extant no hymns to man, no prayers to man, no word in ancient Greek for man-worship. True, the city-states had their hero cults, and Alexander the Great was officially deified, yet in each case the one who was worshiped was believed to be, or at least to have become, a god. The worship itself, moreover, was neither intense nor compulsory, for with the exception of the mystery religions—which with their emphasis on sin, suffering, and redemption by a savior god, were certainly not humanistic—the Greeks were not usually over-serious about their religion.

Despite Toynbee's well-known distaste for the Jews, his own cast of mind is curiously Hebraic: there can be for him absolutely no trifling with divine matters. Seriousness about anything is for Toynbee proof of religious commitment. Thus, because many Greeks in the 5th century B.C.E. took seriously the possibility of human freedom and the reality of human power, Toynbee concludes that they *worshiped* man; and because they participated in public religious rites he asserts that they worshiped the state as such. He will not recognize the difference between their official state cults, which were generally neither gloomy nor intolerant of more personal religions, and modern totalitarianism. The Greeks loved their city-states, not because, as Toynbee asserts, they were idolatrous, but because their states were beautiful and lovable to them; why then should they not have participated light-heartedly in cults which were as much civic as religious? In any event, this "fundamentally irreligious state religion," as Nilson describes it, was not nearly as fanatical as Toynbee's grim phrases suggest.

In Greek philosophy Toynbee sees only what he wishes to see. Certainly his account of Socrates' position offers an original perspective. According to Toynbee, in a passage which must be quoted at length to give its full subtlety, "One of Socrates' theories was that wrong-doing was due, not to wickedness, but to ignorance. . . . Man is always trying to do right according to his lights. This Socratic view was also characteristically Hellenic; for an inclination to translate moral issues into non-moral terms was an Hellenic foible. In the idiom of the Greek language in Socrates' day, the usage of the word *'kalos,'* meaning 'beautiful,' was stretched to stand for 'good' in the moral sense as well as the aesthetic. This attempt to reduce moral issues to questions of taste or knowledge . . . was challenged not only by the facts of everyday private life, but also by notorious contemporary public events."

Toynbee describes as such a public "wrong" the Athenians' decision to use funds collected from their allies for defense against the Persians to rebuild the Athenian temples destroyed during the Persian invasion in 480 B.C.E. He does not remind the reader, however, that the temples of Athens were razed because the Athenians, unlike many of their neighbors, chose to fight rather than keep their city physically intact by surrendering to the Persians. In any event, having described this second "wrong," Toynbee concludes thus his refutation of Socrates' philosophy: "This one discreditable transaction was sufficient proof that Socrates' analysis of human nature had been too sanguine."

I do not see why—G. E. Moore to the contrary notwithstanding—it is necessarily a "foible" to translate moral issues into non-moral terms. Toynbee is describing what we call today ethical naturalism, of which there is indeed a deep vein in the work of Plato and Aristotle (and in that of John Dewey, too). Evidently he resents the Greek quest to understand, in so far as it is possible, the things of this life in terms of this life.

The passage just quoted suggests either no reading of Xenophon or Plato (our main authorities on the teachings of Socrates) or a recollection long since twisted awry. For where Toynbee claims that Socrates, unaware of the ambiguities of his own language, confused beauty with moral goodness, both Plato and Xenophon depict Socrates as a master of linguistic analysis, Plato in particular presenting Socrates in a number of dialogues as concerned with just those distinctions to which Toynbee suggests he was blind. In Plato's *Gorgias,* Socrates asks: "It seems you do not think that 'beautiful' and 'good,' or 'bad' and 'ugly' are identical. . . . [With regard to] all lovely things . . . is there no standard that you refer to by which you call them, severally, beautiful? . . . You term them beautiful either for some pleasure, or their utility, or both?" In the *Symposium* and the *Republic,* Socrates is shown as relating *deliber-*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ately the concepts of beauty and goodness, not using them interchangeably in a naive way, as Toynbee suggests.

The Socrates of our sources is never presented as confusing the process that brings a thing into being with the final product, as Toynbee's "refutation" does; he does not assume that a thing considered beautiful by the many is necessarily morally good; and he certainly does not believe that men are incapable of acting wrongly. The plain fact is that Plato assigns to Socrates some of the strongest criticisms of Greek imperialism ever voiced; while Socrates' strictures in the *Republic* against the moral corruptions that can attend the production and enjoyment of art are surpassed in their severity only by Tolstoy's arguments in *What is Art?*

By now, I suspect, the pattern of Toynbee's prejudices with respect to the Greeks is clear: his gloomy and puritanical outlook forbids him to concede that their greatest thinkers were sophisticated in their attempt to introduce as much harmony as possible into an existence which they knew was only too liable to tragic disruption. Toynbee, however, views with contempt the spectacle of men trying to order their lives without belief in his particular version of Christianity; thus, he cannot understand why the Greeks, who tried to substitute harmony for fear as a means of checking destructive passion, treasured beauty and order as they did.

As for myself, I find less arrogance in the Greeks' concern with the possibilities and limitations of human life than I do in Toynbee's ill-concealed assurance that his own religious insight gives him a warrant, not merely to criticize and reject, but to despise the noblest efforts of other men. As a historian Toynbee is singularly lacking in compassion. He calls the break-up of Greek civilization a tragedy—yet throughout his discussion he presents the Greeks as naive, if not actually stupid. And after deciding that stupidity and pride were to blame for the Greeks' inability to maintain their civilization, he goes on to see in the history of Rome little more than a long decadence:

"Before Christianity had become the official religion of the Hellenic world-state, and before the barbarians had established their successor states on what had formerly been Hellenic ground, Hellenism was already dead; and it had died of the Hellenes' own failure to respond to a challenge with which they had been confronted as far back in their history as the 5th century B.C. . . . the establishment of an Hellenic world-state had been, not a cure for Hellenism's malady, but merely a temporary palliative."

Once again, Toynbee's haste to find a moral makes him insensitive to the society he is describing. I will not discuss in detail his exaggerated estimate of the disorder in the ancient world during the last few centuries before the birth of Jesus; suffice it to say that one could never tell from Toynbee's account that the period he melodramatically labels "The Age of Agony" was not insignificant in the history of human thought. (In keeping with Toynbee's indifference to Greek science and mathematics, the names of Euclid and Archimedes, to mention only two of the greatest Hellenistic thinkers, do not even appear in his book.)

Toynbee's discussion of Rome reveals a clash between two of his preoccupations. On the one hand, he is anxious to discover in the ancient world parallels to the unification he believes must take place in our own time. He favors accordingly the program of the Empire, so much so that he does not reflect that local freedom cannot be curtailed without stultification. On the other hand, although Toynbee's distaste for pluralism explains his view of the Roman imperial system, his concern to apply Spenglerian patterns of growth and decay to civilizations prevents him from admitting that even at its best the Empire could be anything but a "palliative" for an already incurably sick Hellenic civilization. Once Toynbee decides to place Greece and Rome in the category of a single Hellenic civilization, and once he asserts that the civilization committed suicide in the 5th century B.C.E., however much he favors the Empire from the standpoint of unity, he must look on it, even when it appears to be flourishing, as only deceptively promising. The owl of Minerva flies only at dusk: Rome's attempt to unify the ancient world came too late, since the Greeks, wayward individualists as they were, had already destroyed forever the possibility of success. Can we call this kind of reasoning "historical"?

Such being Toynbee's handling of Greek and Roman history, where he feels himself most at ease, even the reader unfamiliar with Toynbee's discussions of the Jews in his other works will be prepared for his treatment of them in *Hellenism*. His bias is manifest in his choice of language, for we are told of "Judaea's fanatical religion," of "the vein of exclusiveness and intolerance

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that was the dark side of Jewish monotheism," of "unmitigated Jewish intransigence," of "the Christian's aggressive intransigence, both sublime and perverse, and, in both aspects . . . Judaic," and of "the Judaic vein of exclusiveness and intolerance in the spirit of Christianity."

In Toynbee's eyes, the Jews are fanatical and nothing else. Therefore (to give only two of his most outstanding and characteristic judgments on the Jews) the Palestinian Revolt of 66–70 was merely a desperate attempt by the Jews to impose their religion on others by force; and this same arrogance showed itself in the intellectual realm in their refusal to use Hellenic philosophy for the explication of their religious beliefs. As history, these statements too are, of course, nonsense; but if Toynbee does not read Plato carefully, why be surprised at his ignorance of the Old Testament? And if the author of the ten-volume *Study of History* has forgotten Caligula's reversal of Augustus' policy of tolerance, the corruption of the Roman procurators in Palestine, and the ferocious Roman pogroms, who will dare to suggest that he refer to any competent textbook? Finally, if Toynbee finds Euclid and Archimedes too unimportant to refer to in a history of Hellenic civilization, there is no point in being shocked at his neglect of Philo Judaeus, who, like the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls, is not even mentioned. Perhaps the most charitable way of summarizing Toynbee's attitude towards the Jews is to say that in *Hellenism* they fare only slightly worse than the Greeks.

Hellenism is a bad book. Its scholarship is shoddy; the cast of mind underlying its premises is disturbing. For although I want peace as much as Toynbee does, I fear that his kind of intellectual intolerance can only exacerbate what he proposes to cure. The nations of the world may not succeed in living together harmoniously without being forced to do so, but if they do, it will be, at least in part, because they will have taken the trouble to understand one another. Such understanding, however, is very similar to good scholarship; both require humility and a willingness to learn, even when what is discovered is not immediately pleasing. But when we are sure in advance that we alone are in possession of the truth, we can be neither good neighbors and citizens nor good scholars. Toynbee's *Hellenism* exists as a negative proof of how intimately these virtues are connected.

Dreiser's Prejudices

LETTERS OF THEODORE DREISER: A SELECTION IN THREE VOLUMES. Edited by ROBERT H. ELIAS. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1067 pp. $18.00.

Reviewed by MILTON HINDUS

SOME may see in these meticulously edited volumes a form of poetic justice: compensation to Dreiser for the indignities that were visited upon him when his first book *Sister Carrie* was published in 1900. These letters reveal, from Dreiser's point of view, the complete sequence of events which led to the suppression of that remarkable work by its own publisher. But other people may be struck by something ludicrous in the pedantic care with which the letters have been edited. Every period and comma accidentally omitted by the author is painstakingly bracketed by Professor Elias: where but in America could an acaddemician have been found who would treat every line of Dreiser's letters with the reverence elsewhere reserved for sacred or classical texts? I tend to sympathize with both points of view. Though I have long responded to Dreiser's work and regretted the injustice done him at the beginning of his career I should not compare him with Emerson and Whitman, as the editor does.

The critical battle over Dreiser's literary reputation was first joined, I suppose, in 1915 when the late Stuart P. Sherman, one of the more notable pupils of Irving Babbitt, penned a ferocious attack in the pages of the *Nation,* which he later entitled (when it was reprinted in a book) "The Barbaric Naturalism of Theodore Dreiser." "Mr. Dreiser drives home the great truth," wrote Sherman, "that man is essentially an animal, impelled by temperament, instinct, physics, chemistry—anything you please that is irrational and uncontrollable."

Such partisans of Dreiser as H. L. Mencken (to whom a great many of the letters in this collection are addressed) saw in such attacks little more than the rearguard actions of retreating Puritanism. To them, Dreiser was a continuous *cause célèbre.* The typical expression of the pro-Dreiser view is to be found in Sherwood Anderson's introduction to a selection of Dreiser's stories in 1918. Anderson wrote: "Puri-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tanism, as a choking, smothering force, is dead or dying. We are rapidly approaching the old French standard wherein the only immorality for the artist is in bad art and I think that Theodore Dreiser, the man, has done more than any living American to bring this about. All honor to him."

The most radical rejection of Dreiser's place in American literature was probably that made by T. S. Eliot, who congratulated Scott Fitzgerald on the publication of *The Great Gatsby* by saying, "It seems to me to be the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James." This was written in the year in which *An American Tragedy* appeared, and the depreciation of Dreiser was not shared by Fitzgerald himself, who never ceased to speak well of the older writer. By 1925 the supporters of Dreiser had so far prevailed that Stuart Sherman himself admitted to a change of heart and spoke respectfully of "tragic realism" to describe what he had previously called "barbaric naturalism."

DREISER'S gift at his best was for pathos. He excels in depicting the casual accidents which overwhelm ordinary, undistinguished people like Hurstwood in *Sister Carrie* or Clyde Griffiths in *An American Tragedy*. Fitzgerald once said that Dreiser's central feeling is "that life is too strong and remorseless for the sons of men." In Dreiser's first book, his ingenuity is spent upon forging an inevitable chain of minute slow circumstances which lead Hurstwood, step by suffering step, to his death. From the moment Hurstwood's decline begins to that in which "a slow, black boat setting out from the pier at Twenty-seventh street upon its weekly errand bore, with many others, his nameless body to the Potter's Field," Dreiser's narrative casts an inexorable spell. Hurstwood's story certainly has (to use Dreiser's word from one of these letters) "grip," but the "grip," we should emphasize, is that of pathos. Perhaps Professor Elias recognizes this when he says that "Dreiser . . . at his most exalted moments must yield to tears."

The nihilistic world outlook which emerges from this collection of Dreiser's letters is the same as that which one encounters in his other books. The difference is that here the philosophy is stated more abstractly, less graphically. In one letter he calls the universe "blind"; in another, he describes man as "a thing and a mechanistic device." Religion to him "is a bandage for sore brains. Morality ditto." It does not surprise the reader to find Dreiser writing to Mencken about the latter's book *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche:* "If the outline of Mr. Nietzsche's philosophy in the introduction is correct, he and myself are hale fellows well met." And it is to Nietzsche probably that he owes the sentiment expressed two years later in a letter to the journalist William C. Lengel: "I should like to see a race of people for once on this earth who like Niccolo Machiavelli could look life in the face."

The conclusion that it takes a superman to deal adequately with life follows from the premise that ordinary men, including Dreiser, find an unfathomable maze. Writing in the *Bookman,* after the appearance of *An American Tragedy,* Dreiser said: "I can make no comment on my work or my life that holds either interest or import for me. Nor can I imagine any explanation or interpretation of any life, my own included, that would be true—or important, if true. Life is to me too much a welter and play of inscrutable forces to permit, in my case at least, any significant comment. . . . In short I catch no meaning from all I have seen, and pass quite as I came, confused and dismayed." The bleak barrenness of this formulation is an honest reflection of the habitual state of Dreiser's mind.

I WAS interested in tracing through this correspondence two themes in particular: the development of his sympathies for Communism and the persistence of his anti-Semitism (and anti-Catholicism). Both seem to me expressions of a basically aggressive temperament. Long before becoming a Communist or fellow-traveler, Dreiser's heart had gone out to what later came to be called "the little man," but this early phase of his "social-mindedness" expressed itself, curiously enough, in an antagonism to organized labor. In a letter in 1921, Dreiser says: "Insofar as I can judge, organized labor is as prone to ally itself with the forces of predatory capital as not, and that with a view to extracting from the small taxpayer and home dweller all that he can be made to pay. . . . The banker and tradesman and the retailer and the corporation with its investors can prey upon the small clerk, male or female, or upon the householder in general who has but a petty source of income at best and who could not organize if he would. . . ."

In 1928, still in his pre-Communist phase, he writes to Michael Gold of "the ruthless suppres-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sion of individualism by Communism," and sums up the situation in Russia (which he had recently visited) in the vivid phrase: "peace and prosperity under a gun." To Louise Campbell in the same year, he writes about the book he was preparing on his Russian visit: "The GPU stuff will have to be set off by itself as a separate chapter. It concerns a kind of thing the Russians love—terrorism & will have to have the psychology of that discanted on. It is all over Russia fear of the secret police." In 1927, he had written the Russian critic Sergei Dinamov: "Dealing with man is a practical thing—not a theoretical one. Nothing can alter his emotions, his primitive and animal reactions to life. Greed, selfishness, vanity, hate, passion, love, are all inherent in the least of us, and until such are eradicated, there can be no Utopia. . . . I think it will always be survival of the fittest, whether in the monarchies of England, the democracies of America, or the Soviets of Russia."

The great change in Dreiser's feeling was precipitated by the depression of 1929. He was personally hard hit by the economic decline, as were many of the people he knew. We find him writing to Louise Campbell: "More trouble in my camp. Liveright Inc. is busted. No money. They are breaking their contract with me which means 7/8th of my annual income. Now I have to start out and find another Publisher. Also some way to live. That means Horn and Hardart's I guess. But with time I get down to bedrock—say $50 a week maybe. The good old days."

Dreiser was in his sixties, with a lifetime of hard and successful work behind him, when this happened. Three years after having told off Michael Gold, we find him "stating quite flatly that my solution for the difficulties of the world, and particularly those in America, is Communism." Once a fellow-traveler, he made himself very useful to the Communists. Occasionally, in his later years, he would break out against the "cheap trickery" of the party (this particular letter referred to the unauthorized use of his name to raise money for it), but he managed on the whole to negotiate the twists and turns of the line. With age came increasing embitterment; he did not shrink from the ultimate consequences of the committment he had made: "I have been watching this American game ever since I began to work for $3.00 a week, and I have seen the drift as thousands of others before me have seen it. I wish it could be settled by mass voting. I actually think it will be settled by civil war."

One letter, unfortunately not in this collection, is described by Helen Dreiser in her book *My Life With Dreiser*. It was written some time during the Second World War and addressed directly to Stalin. Knowing that he was one of the best-selling American authors in Russia and never having collected any royalties on his books, Dreiser complained directly to the dictator. The reply, without any note attached, was a check for $34,600. A second message to Stalin is reproduced in the text. It was the wire he sent in 1945 when it was clear that the Soviets were reneging on the Yalta decisions: "Urge clarification Polish question as American capitalistic reaction is creating most unfortunate misunderstanding. Our two nations should grow in friendship. Please deal with our Americans gently. Just now it is so important."

A short time before Dreiser died, he made the relationship official by joining the Communist party.

DREISER'S anti-Semitism is of that "native" kind which is immune to rational argument. To H. L. Mencken he writes of "78 different breeds of kykes." He describes New York as "a scream —a Kyke's dream of a ghetto. The lost tribe has taken the island." To one correspondent he relates a financial difficulty as follows: "There is something like 50,000 schillings that belong to me over in Vienna but which my Austrian Jew publishers—Zsolnay—have been holding out on me for the last three years. I finally got a lawyer, and he being a Jew, although I didn't know it, evidently proceeded to make fairly comfortable terms for Zsolnay, but just recently I have dropped him and I certainly expect to close this up and to my advantage soon." He is even moved to doubt the official population figures of cities like Chicago, claiming that they must contain larger percentages of Jews than is generally admitted. Such an idea is on the edge, at least, of pathology.

Dreiser's feelings about the Jews spilled over into print in an editorial in the September 1933 *American Spectator*, which drew some sharp questions from Hutchins Hapgood. This led to an exchange of letters that served as the basis of Hapgood's article "Is Dreiser Anti-Semitic?" in the *Nation* in 1935. Reading Dreiser's part of this correspondence more than twenty years later, Hapgood's question appears rhetorical.

Dreiser disapproved of things in Germany un-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

der Hitler, but his disapproval, as recorded in these letters, is almost imperceptible. What really hurt Dreiser was the Nazi banning of his books, and he was moved to complain of it in 1935 in the following way: "It appears that my books have just been banned in Germany on the ground that they are subversive of morals and character—the morals and character required to erect and continue a worthwhile society. I am wondering if they think I am a Jew. Many, many people for some reason believe that I am! One thing that may have tended to confirm this in their thought is that I wrote a Jewish tragedy —the Hand of the Potter—which had quite a run in Germany. Its social accuracy appears to have misled many Jews. What do you suppose could be done to alter this German viewpoint —if that is the viewpoint?"

Now, Dreiser's play *The Hand of the Potter* is neither Jewish nor a tragedy except in the most peripheral sense of those terms; it is a self-caricature, the *reductio ad absurdum* of the theory underlying *An American Tragedy*. The plot concerns a sex-crazed criminal, Isadore Berchansky, who, before the play opens, had been convicted of an assult upon a child. In the play he returns to his family after serving his prison term. We see him trying to make love to his sister, who rebuffs him, to his little niece, and finally to Kitty Neafie, the eleven-year-old daughter of an Irish neighbor, whom he rapes and kills in a bedroom off stage, while the audience is regaled with suggestive sounds. Now comes an interesting turn. The Berchansky family, returning from the park, finding the little girl's slipper, learning from Mrs. Neafie of the disappearance of her girl, and seeing Isadore in flight, enters into a conspiracy to cover up for him. Every member of the family is shown going before a grand jury inquest and perjuring himself. The only faintly sympathetic member of the family is the father, Aaron Berchansky, an old Jewish thread peddler, who is finally moved to rebel against overwhelming family loyalty and to accuse his own son. Isadore then becomes the object of a manhunt, and finally takes his own life. The last scene shows us some reporters, including one Dennis Quinn of the *Sun*, discussing the meaning of these morbid events.

Concerning the worth of the play, Mencken wrote Dreiser: "This is by sober, honest judgment: The play is a piece of pish—clumsy, banal, unnatural, almost idiotic. . . . You merely state certain commonplace facts, and then follow with a commonplace theory to account for them. The whole thing is loose, elephantine, and devoid of sting. It has no more dramatic structure than a jelly-fish." Dreiser replied (in a letter of December 18, 1916): "What has a tragedy ever illuminated—unless it is the inscrutability of life and its forces and its accidents? What has one ever sought to teach or inculcate." The play certainly seems distasteful now. It is also a rare work for Dreiser in that not a single character, with the possible exception of Aaron Berchansky, the father, is really created, and even he is only just beginning to emerge from the marble.

Because of Dreiser's importance historically, then, these letters belong in the record; but they hardly seem to serve his memory well. I myself found it necessary, after finishing them, to re-read some of his better fiction to get rid of the taste they left.

Tales by Toman

A Kindly Contagion. By Walter Toman. Bobbs-Merrill. 218 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by David Ray

Quite belatedly—for Walter Toman's work, long popular in Germany, has been making the rounds of American publishers for some years —Bobbs-Merrill has brought out a volume of his tales. They are original little allegories which, although sharing much with Kafka and Isaac Babel and occasionally with the fancifully grotesque drawings of Paul Klee and George Grosz, attain a dimension of acid satire all their own. Toman's highly individual personality holds his work in check with an objectivity which tempers only the greatest of satirical writings; to expose his own personality thoroughly, a personality of genial yet realistic insight, without ever appearing unjust or paranoic, is his peculiar gift.

A Vienna-trained psychoanalyst and contributor of articles to the psychiatric journals of Europe (he is now a member of the faculty of Brandeis University), Toman has obviously adapted the fantasy life, the allegory-spinning capacity of dream-making, and the highlighting of insights, achieved in bewilderment, that are both the subject and the method of his profession. Some readers will see, in a bizarre story like "The Roll-Thrower," a satire of political

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

patronage systems or a depiction of the infinite adaptability of man to new, demanding situations. But what every reader, regardless of his interpretation, will share when reading these tales is the sense of recognition, a glimpse into his own experience, even if he cannot put his finger on exactly what experience it was.

Of course, Toman is sometimes less elusive. In "The Do-It-Yourself Living Space," for example, he is obviously satirizing recent European history, the arms race, and international politics by treating them as personal behavior taking place inside an apartment house. In the story "Love in Armor," two lovers attempt to embrace, though dressed in awkward and confining armor. Like John Crowe Ransom's "The Equilibrists," the story depicts the kind of tortuous personal relationship in which two people simply cannot achieve intimacy no matter how hard they try—call it frigidity, rigidity, bashfulness, custom, honor, or whatever. "What goes on between us now is an unfortunate thing. . . . We embrace each other; I kiss her visor. We even want to get married in style and live together, but I am not sure whether we shall ever lie together naked." There is nothing original about Toman's metaphor of armor, yet he manages somehow, without sacrificing simplicity, to sound an original note.

This simplicity and originality is illustrated in a little tale by Toman which I quote *in toto:* "Those were the days, when Luise and I were still pulling Kingmeier's wagon! Kingmeier was a butcher who had good common sense; that was why he sold his wagon together with his horses and bought himself a smaller one, one which two people could pull without much trouble, even when it was loaded. Our daily work consisted of pulling this wagon, and of waiting in the street when something was being loaded or unloaded. At such times he would toss a blanket over each of us to cover our nakedness, for otherwise we were both bare, and in the summer we didn't need a blanket even while waiting. Although during the summer sometimes the people on the street complained about our being naked, and though as workhorses we were under the authority of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which had no objections, as human beings we had to contend with the police control of public morals, and they insisted that we wear bathing suits at least. They said they understood our peculiar position and therefore allowed us to wear bathing suits, but in the city they couldn't reduce their demands for decency any more than that. So from then on we went about our daily work in bathing suits, and not until evening, when Kingmeier led us to our stalls and put some bread in the manger, did we undress, eat, and throw ourselves down on the straw.

"Those were the days! Luise and I stuck together day and night; there was nothing else we wanted of the world, and Kingmeier made all that possible for us in such an elegant way. But after less than three years Kingmeier died one day; his heirs sold our wagon and the stable and drove us away. It was then that I was unfaithful to Luise for the first time, and soon after that Luise strayed too without telling me about it. We wore clothes now too, and maybe that had something to do with it. Everything was quite different from the way it had been, and even now it is pretty dreary, although we two, Luise and I, still stick together as we used to do."

One could point out many things about this story, and yet they would all be redundant. The quest for dignity that makes one half-animal and half-human, the fall from grace, and the bitter disillusionment of the years and of a disintegrating marital relationship, are all imparted in a sad, Shandean good humor.

"Busse's World Theater" is a story about a chocolate wrapper so impoverished that on his dates he pays "her way to the movies, waits outside and afterward buys her a beer, not drinking one himself, or at most taking a sip of hers." He rejoices to be admitted into membership in Busse's World Theater, an organization that will remind some readers of the Communist party, others simply of any hollow promise. After being admitted into "not just any old theater, but Busse's World Theater—the stress is on World," the story's Steig-like protagonist goes back to his life as a chocolate wrapper, taking comfort in "the man from Busse's World Theater saying that for the time being everything would remain as it has been. I emphasize: for the time being."

Toman's work impresses one as that of a deep and compassionate humanist, a visionary scarred by his own sufferings and guilt, for Toman's comfortable future was shattered by his being drafted into the German army at the beginning of World War II. Wounded in Russia and discharged in 1942, he spent the rest of the war years beginning to work with his talent for what he calls not stories but "short circuits." His

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stories short-circuit, like sparks or lightning bolts. Toman wrote them, he says, "to fill an air raid shelter, a wrecked house, very empty stomachs, and even whole people mourning over losses of their beloved or of all their possessions with something, maybe light. So I kept writing them in spite of the fact that peace, brotherhood and love 'have since been restored to us.'"

A Curiosity Piece

NEW FACE IN THE MIRROR. By YAEL DAYAN. World Publishing Co. 151 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by ROSE GUILDENSTERN

IN AN interview with a French journalist, Yael Dayan is reported to have said that she does not consider this book of hers to be a work of art, but a documentary (*témoignage*). One is still left wondering how the book got into print, since it lacks even the commercial virtues of narrative pace and readability. There is of course Miss Dayan's illustrious surname, but that is not enough. One must assume that the publishers are relying on public interest in the women's corps of the Israeli army; for who could fail to be curious about a conscripted women's army? That this subject exercises a peculiar fascination can hardly be denied, for who has not seen the archetypical Israeli girl, rifle in hand, on innumerable book jackets, posters, and advertisements? Even Israeli girls trying to make Hollywood by posing in the nude are photographed with a Sten gun. Miss Dayan comes no closer to satisfying this curiosity than when she has her heroine think, after her boy friend has remarked that he "had it tough" in the army: "What do you know about it? When you fall on your gun it's your chest that hits the ground, not a pair of breasts sensitized by the cold . . ."

Miss Dayan's heroine, Ariel Ron, is the daughter of an Area Commander, and does not get on very well with her parents. We follow Ariel through her basic training, officer cadet school and hospital service, a stint as a company commander, and as guide and receptionist for new immigrants at a border village. She gets involved with two Gentile brothers (with one of whom she sleeps) and then falls in love with a much older man, a Gentile who works as a political adviser to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and into whose house she moves, finally going off to Brittany to write this book. These events, if one can call them that ("if something didn't happen of its own accord I would have to make it"), are presented one-dimensionally, lifelessly, with no talent for narrative or the depiction of picaresque incident. Through it all, Ariel's character has one string to its fiddle: she acts perversely and wickedly to anyone who is nice to her. But she is saved from her own naughtiness in the end. Peter Bend, the middle-aged Gentile, believes she really has a heart of gold, and behold, she comes round to think the same herself.

In fact, Ariel Ron is an insufferable prig whose imagination never strays beyond the bounds of puerile fantasy: "I was as popular and obedient as I had planned to be. Anyone needing help came to me. I was amusing, lighthearted and had opinions on everything . . . [My room was] full of secrets: curious objects hanging on the wall, a few good paintings, a lot of books, all read and many of them carefully studied."

The rest is soap opera: "I waited near his car. Then he came out and we drove away. The next two hours were unforgettable. They were the real celebration of my birthday. I was really happy; and I felt love—a difficult love. I knew he had a family; I knew there was no hope of continuity, but here was a man who loved me so much that he was afraid of himself and of his love; who wanted to stop seeing me, to forget me, but who always came back."

If the book is not a novel, neither does it document very much, except insofar as the choice of English to write in, and the Gentility of the heroine's three lovers, provide a sort of documentation. When Ariel has to explain the meaning of "love of country" to her company, she reduces the Zionist chapter of Israeli history to a (somewhat dishonest) tale of infantile absurdity, too long to quote here. Ariel is far too much of a narcissist to let reality penetrate; she remains perpetually virgin to experience. Saddest of all, this is presented as Israeli writing, which is grossly unfair to a serious writer like S. Yizhar, who, in his long novel *Days of Ziklag*, has painted a very convincing picture of what Israeli army life is like.

Miss Dayan is her own best prognosticator: "What next? Unfortunately, I lost interest."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sociological Sampler

SOCIOLOGY TODAY, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS. Edited by ROBERT K. MERTON, LEONARD BLOOM, and LEONARD S. COTTRELL, JR. Basic Books. 623 pp. $7.50.

Reviewed by REUEL DENNEY

THE editors of *Sociology Today* have put together thirty-five readable papers which serve to update us on many of the problems of method that make it so easy for sociologists to pick a bone with one another. The book's purpose is not to provide a conspectus of sociological knowledge as it stands today, nor to investigate its goals in social action and community policy. It is to provide an idea of what the editors call sociology's "strategic" concerns.

The result is a collection of papers which few general readers would want to wade straight through, but which does invite a sampling. The prospective sampler should know that the volume is developed in five major sections—an introductory note on problem-finding in sociology, supplied in lively fashion by Robert Merton; a lengthy section on methods in the study of institutions; a shorter section on the "group and the person"; another long section on population and social structure; and a concluding group of papers on a few contemporary applications of sociology.

Two papers in the sociology of institutions serve as an example of how useful these essays are to anyone working in the field. Seymour Lipset's review of research in the sociology of politics is clear, packed, and comprehensive. Everett Hughes's discussion of the study of occupations is marked by the deceptive ease and informality with which Hughes usually passes on to his reader an encyclopedic grasp of the literature, a trap-shooter's sense of the way the intellectual target is moving, and an originality so profound that it almost throws its lines away. These are merely two instances of a high level of thinking and writing found in many papers.

The remarkable thing about the collection, however, is that it genuinely serves the purpose suggested in the title—it conveys to the reader, with a great deal of fidelity, the very tone of sociological concerns in the last decade or so. This tone is struck at once, by Merton, in an introduction that gracefully induces the reader to re-think the relation between sociological questions and sociological answers. As Merton says: it is not merely a matter of how certain questions, once stated, become widely taken for granted as questions of importance by the profession as a whole. It is a matter of how curiosity and interest get stirred up in the first place.

One of the reasons, as Merton suggests, is that previous researches prove to be inconsistent with one another in this or that respect. For example: the results of researches on the effects of authoritarian and democratic climates of education on learning are not by any means harmonious in their findings. Why this should be so—and the why is not yet forthcoming—emerges as one of the more interesting sociological problems of our time.

A QUESTION that one American often asks another—frequently as a rhetorical introduction to a non-scholastic lecture on the topic—is whether the American family is changing. By the time this sort of topical question is formulated in the papers that make up this book, it has changed its shape. In William J. Goode's contribution on the study of the family, it has become the question of whether the available theory of the family, as propounded by the specialists, has "the sweep, the drama, and the ear-compelling sonorities" that any good general theory should have. Goode's answer, put forward with force and persuasiveness, is simply "No."

In the first place, Goode observes, there are sociological classics in many adjacent fields, but none that deals principally with the family. Some of the most systematic work on the family is in the field of kinship structure and nomenclature; but this deals with only one aspect of the family, and its adaptability to symbolic precision in theory-building is rather a special case. Again, the family is such a central and all-functional institution that it is not detached readily for analysis. Mr. Goode himself is content, in his paper, to present an inventory of the various functions of the family. He concludes, not illogically, with an interesting four-fold classification of families as they exist in all cultures roundabout the globe. We are in the fourth class, the class in which love is integrated more freely with mate-choice than in the other three. His major point is that he sees the other three types discouraging romantic love not by culturally defining it out of existence (a theory held by many observers) but by recognizing it, and controlling it overtly by various measures of suppression.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS FOR COMMENTARY READERS

1. Law in a Changing Society

By W. Friedmann. Convinced that law must respond to social change if it is to be a paramount instrument of social order, Mr. Friedmann, director of International Legal Research at Columbia University, traces the pattern of law's development against the tapestry of social change.

522 pages $8.50

2. Law and Opinion in England in the 20th Century

Edited by Morris Ginsberg. What Dicey's *Lectures* did for the 19th century, this collection of essays does for the present. Seventeen distinguished contributors—including Cole, Robson and Titmuss—are assembled with a formidable group of English sociologists.

390 pages $6.50

3. Old Age and Political Behavior

By Frank A. Pinner, Paul Jacobs and Philip Selznick. Are older persons in our time so isolated as to constitute a politically explosive force? The political implications are presented here; the subject is George McLain's California Institute of Social Welfare.

363 pages; tables $5.00

4. Labor in a Free Society

Edited by Michael Harrington and Paul Jacobs, with a foreword by Clark Kerr. Hugh A. Clegg, David L. Cole, Archibald Cox, Erich Fromm, Arthur Goldberg, J. R. McClelland and Sumner Slichter analyze all aspects of modern labor's dilemma: The Arden House Symposium on Trade Unionism.

202 pages $3.00

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Berkeley 4, California

Not every article is as clear as this one in summarizing the preoccupation of a particular area of study, and evaluating its present state of fertility, connectedness, and consistency. But Goode's piece stands as an example of what most pieces in this book do quickly and do well. Among fields with which I myself happen to keep in touch, I found Lipset's article on political sociology extraordinarily rewarding as an analytical review of developments. I quibble, indeed, with his comment that Peter Drucker is "the only industrial sociologist who deals with industrial bureaucracies both internally as political systems and externally with reference to the prerequisites of a democratic political order." Cetrain sections of *The Lonely Crowd* —sections that, as I recall them, were based on the collaboration of David Riesman and Nathan Glazer—seem to me to have said significant things along this line. Lipset's reference would do better to honor the intensive case-historical exploration of this line of research in Drucker's *The Concept of the Corporation* without making him a wizard. In that way he would justly emphasize the centrality of the corporation in Drucker's interests, the originality of Drucker's contributions on that topic, and the consequent opening up of a whole field of significant theory-building.

Lipset is at pains to remind us that much American and European political sociology has been concerned with conflict—rather than harmony—but that recently it has swung around to asking how it is that certain situations of stability arise and are maintained. Some credit for this goes to Tocqueville and his modern readers. Lipset finds in such a writer a notion of institutionalized dissent which is now seen to be ripe for more empirical investigation. One aspect of the question is basically this: how is it that some conflicts are so dramatically and fully "aired" that they serve the purpose of stability—rather than overt and violent conflict?

As for a sub-field in which the reviewer has a stake, it is not so much merely customary as inevitable that the reviewer look closely. John Riley and Matilda White Riley, who, with Samuel Flowerman, have done some of the most ingenious research and "model-building" in the study of mass communications, present a paper here. Its main purpose is to remind students in the field that "communication" is a total process involving something more than the mere deliberate aiming of a message at an imagined re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ceiver. It does not convince us, as some might hope, that "communication" is an autonomous field of research. It need not. The ancients thought the study of communication was autonomous and so did the medievals: they called it Rhetoric. Modern sociologists know as much about Rhetoric as Aristotle and Bernardo Sylvestria did; and know more than they did about "communication." The Rileys tell us what it is we know and do not yet know.

A Labor Chronicle

THE A. F. OF L. FROM THE DEATH OF GOMPERS TO THE MERGER. By PHILIP TAFT. Harper. 499 pp. $7.50.

Reviewed by BEN B. SELIGMAN

THE turbulent history of labor was simultaneously the history of America's growth. Yet, Philip Taft, who gives us now the second volume of his study of the American Federation of Labor, has chosen to write virtually without any reference to the crucial social and economic forces that made labor what it is. This is indeed the definitive book on the AFL, but it is not history. It is rather a huge and careful chronicle, drawn from minute books, official proceedings, letters, and other documents. It is scrupulously honest and just as scrupulously dull.

Taft himself comes out of the great tradition of labor history founded by John R. Commons at the University of Wisconsin. Commons, too, was a great compiler of facts, but he sought to explain the development of trade unions as an expression of certain economic, social, and legal impulses. Mr. Taft has not been able to join chronicleism to social history as Commons did, and his bare recital of factual material does not allow us to understand the labor movement.

Certainly, the labor movement is in need of understanding today. With so complex a structure and diverse an organization, with so many jurisdictional and legal interconnections and so *seemingly* different an outlook from that manifested by the middle class, with the exacerbating problem of the Johnny Dios, the Becks, and Hoffas, there has been created in the minds of many the image of a clannish interest, hostile to the respectable goals of American society. The real motives of labor, however, conform perfectly to the dominant impulse of American society: the desire for more bread and butter. Why, then, the atmosphere of conflict which has always surrounded the U. S. labor movement?

In the beginning, the American public looked unfavorably on the efforts of shoemakers, cigar workers, carpenters, and clerks to organize and bargain collectively with management. A higher wage was accorded only to those individuals that deserved it; collective demands by a trade union were thought inimical to the interests of the community. Yet the unionization of workers was inevitable. The factory and the nation-wide market had begun to displace the domestic system of manufacture and, together with a vast inflow of cheap labor, had created sweatshops, unsanitary work conditions, and slums. Demands for justice could be enforced only by the strategic withdrawal of irreplaceable skilled workers.

Any number of labor organizations sought to redress the industrial balance, ranging from William Sylvis's National Labor Union to Terence Powderly's Knights of Labor, but it remained for the AFL to meet the new realities of American industry. The pragmatic outlook of Samuel Gompers was well suited to his time. He fought the labor injunction and the blacklist with admirable courage. He preached worker solidarity and patiently nursed AFL affiliates at a time when Pinkerton agents and corporation lawyers had things quite their own way. (Senator Robert La Follette later produced some 70 volumes of testimony exposing the instruments of terror used by corporations against unions.)

Yet, by the time of Gompers' death, his Federation was stagnating. In Taft's flat phrase, it was "inactive," barely able to hold its own, with only 3.5 million members just before the depression. Only with the New Deal did the climate of opinion shift. With the Norris-La Guardia Act of 1932, which restricted the easy application of court injunctions, the NRA's famous Section 7(a), as well as the Wagner Labor Relations Act, a new institutional framework was created for the unions.

Taft's description of the CIO split in 1936 catches none of the drama of that great crisis, although this is one of the few occasions when he permits himself the luxury of the historian's prerogative. It is "difficult to follow the reasoning of the majority of the members of the AFL Executive Council," he comments. "Confronted with the most serious crisis in its history," the AFL's President, William Green, "could think of nothing better . . . than to find a legal loophole by which the unions of the CIO might be thrown out."

The organization of the mass production in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM NEW YORK
AND BOSTON TO
HAIFA
VIA PORTUGAL • ITALY
GREECE • CYPRUS

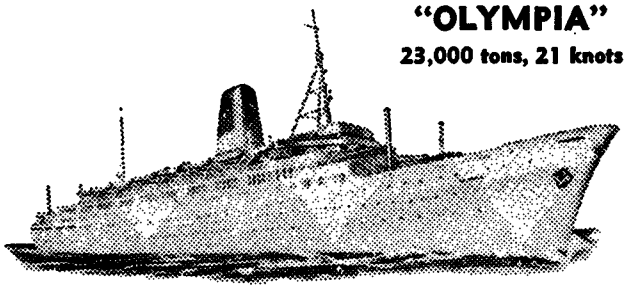
One-Way Tourist
$341 up
(Thrift Season*)
March 25*
April 22
August 5
September 1*

Regular sailings all year to Greece with convenient connections for Haifa.

Largest and fastest to

ISRAEL

"OLYMPIA"
23,000 tons, 21 knots



Tourist or First Class, there is no more delightful way to Israel than aboard our magnificent flagship "OLYMPIA" — enjoyed by thousands of passengers to Israel and on Mediterranean and Caribbean Cruises. 22 spacious public rooms, 8 decks, air-conditioned dining, theatre and lounges, 2 swimming pools. Highly experienced stewards, delicious American and Kosher food. Famous Greek Line hospitality.

See Your Travel Agent

GREEK LINE

10 Bridge Street, New York 4, N. Y.
NEW YORK • ATLANTA • BOSTON • CLEVELAND • CHICAGO • DETROIT • LOS ANGELES
PHILADELPHIA • SAN FRANCISCO • TORONTO • MONTREAL • VANCOUVER

dustries—automobiles, steel, rubber, and textiles—was the task of the CIO, which by 1938 had nine national affiliates and 32 organizing committees. Membership in organized labor reached 10 million by 1941, so that when the war came, powerful unions were able to join with government and management in increasing production, preventing strikes, and helping to reorganize the economy for an unparalleled war effort.

The honeymoon ended with the defeat of Japan. More than 40 major strikes broke out between the summers of 1945 and 1946. The end of price control in June 1946 brought an explosion in prices and the cost of living. Wage demands went up, as labor tried to keep pace with rising retail prices. Disaffection in the ranks and continued public exasperation enabled the 80th Congress to pass the Taft-Hartley Act over President Truman's veto. The unions now had to meet new legal barriers: the abolition of the closed shop, strict limits on union shops and the checkoff, permission to the individual states to toss out "union security" under the guise of "the right to work," and above all, a National Labor Relations Board setup which allowed labor's foes to play havoc with bargaining rights, particularly at the local union level.

In December 1955, as George Meany and Walter Reuther worked to bring together the AFL and CIO, there were predictions of evil aggrandizement, predictions which failed to recognize that labor's new parent body did not possess the control over its affiliates that would make it a "labor monopoly." Nor was it acknowledged that Meany, Reuther, and other labor leaders had long since made their commitments to American capitalism.

With the merger, Taft ends his chronicle. Its detailed descriptions of the various departments of the AFL, and the positions taken by the Executive Council on sundry public issues, will unquestionably be grist for the mills of future scholars. But the book casts little light on the important issues that face the trade unions: the increasing resistance of management to organization, the problem of corruption, the pressures to pass more restrictive legislation, the unsolved rivalries within the movement itself, and, above all, the quiet upheaval being imposed by automation and the new technology. Nor has Taft been able to impart any sense of the basic motivations of a labor movement; the need to achieve identification, security, a posture of dignity. No history can afford to ignore such issues.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two Democratic Traditions

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COMMONWEALTHMAN. By CAROLINE ROBBINS. Harvard University Press. 462 pp. $10.00.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER HILL

THE important problem which Professor Robbins sets herself has never been properly tackled: what is the connection between the English revolutionaries of 1640–60 and the radicals of the age of John Wilkes and the American Revolution? English radicals of the 1770's were very conscious of the heritage of the Great Rebellion —was this a "rediscovery," or had something of the old tradition lived on? Putting the question another way, what happened to the radical revolutionaries and their ideas after 1660, when conservative Parliamentarians combined with royalists to restore the monarchy, the House of Lords, and the bishops?

The problem is more complex than Professor Robbins always realizes. For who were the revolutionaries against whom the conservatives united in 1660? In the first instance, they were the Commonwealthmen, the Parliamentary republicans, who had run the English Commonwealth in the glorious years 1649–1653, and who returned to a brief period of rule in 1659. Yet behind aristocratic republicans like Vane and Milton stood democratic republicans like the Levellers, egalitarians like the Quakers, anarchists like the Fifth Monarchists, and memories of the communist Diggers of 1649. It was fear of this many-headed monster that brought about the restoration in 1660, even though the aristocratic republicans had broken decisively with the democratic republicans in 1649.

In other words, there were two radical traditions from the English Revolution: that of the aristocratic republicans, the so-called Independent grandees; and that of the democratic republicans, whom these grandees suppressed. The former tradition continued as a left wing of Whiggery in the later 17th century, and Miss Robbins has traced a thin line which runs through Algernon Sidney, William Molyneux, Robert Molesworth, and many others down to the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution, themselves aristocratic republicans without much use for democracy. The latter tradition has no such clear pedigree. There were Levellers in Worcestershire in the 1670's, and men who called themselves Levellers in the Hudson Valley in 1766. Individual representatives of this tradition were active in Monmouth's Revolt of 1685; but no organized movement of democratic republicanism survived the repression that followed 1685 and the triumph of the Whig aristocrats in 1688.

Yet men knew about the Levellers in the 18th century. Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield "would have all men kings. I would be a king myself. We have all naturally an equal right to the throne: we are all originally equal." This, he added, "was once the opinion of a set of honest men who were called Levellers." When political radicalism arose as a mass movement, first with the Wilkesites and then with the Corresponding Societies, its ideas had far more in common with those of the Levellers than with those of Professor Robbins's Commonwealthmen.

Nevertheless, the most important part of the democratic heritage had to be rediscovered by historians; the political position and influence of the Levellers were not properly understood, indeed, until the late 19th century. So the problem of linking the 17th century democratic republicans with the late 18th century radicals still remains. This is not, unfortunately, the manner in which Professor Robbins approached the problem. Her failure to discriminate between the Levellers and the Independent grandees who shot them down makes her speak as though she was exploring a single composite trend, and her references to "the Utopian chimeras" of the Levellers suggest that she has not studied them very closely.

A book remains to be written on the disappearance of the radical revolutionary tradition after 1660, and indeed after 1649. It would have to emphasize the violent suppression of the Levellers and the Fifth Monarchists by Cromwell; the "white terror" and censorship of the years after 1660; the deliberate anti-revolutionary propaganda of the restored Church of England, with its doctrine of nonresistance; and especially the fear of another civil war, shared by ex-Parliamentarians of property as well as by ex-royalists.

Some of the radicals, moreover, were driven by political reaction and their own disillusion into emigration: their influence in America still needs proper investigation. Many others, abandoning their millenarian hopes, decided that Christ's kingdom was not of this world, and withdrew from politics into religious quietism. The Quakers became after 1660 what they cer-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tainly had not been before, a pacifist sect. So, by the time dissent won toleration in 1689, it had ceased to be politically dangerous. The nonconformists who benefitted by the Toleration Act were sober, respectable, industrious citizens, unpolitical in their outlook. They evolved their own education and culture, more democratic, more critical, more utilitarian and more scientific than that of Oxford and Cambridge—but provincial and stunted. This split between the arts and the sciences, the ornamental and the useful, has remained to bedevil the English educational system ever since.

Finally, any analysis of why democratic republicanism disappeared in the later 17th century would have to take account of its close connection with social groups—the yeomanry, the small master craftsmen—who were on the downgrade after the revolutionary decades. The century after 1660 saw the disappearance of the small landowner; it saw a few craftsmen thriving to become industrial capitalists, while the vast mass of them declined to the position of wage laborers—whom even the Levellers would have excluded from the franchise. Leveller democracy thus lost its social basis: the revolt of the dissenting craftsmen in the southwestern counties in 1685 was the last kick of a dying cause. When radicalism reappeared a century later, it was almost exclusively urban. Its first leaders were, indeed, small craftsmen; but, as radicalism shaded insensibly off through Chartism into the labor movement, its rank and file came increasingly from the working class of the great cities.

Professor Robbins's study of the aristocratic republican tradition makes several new and important points. First, it establishes beyond possibility of contradiction the central significance of James Harrington. There is hardly a character in Professor Robbins's book who was not influenced by his theory of the balance of property and the economic basis of politics. His influence on the American revolutionaries, long known, is now shown to have been only the culmination of a long line of Whig thought.

Secondly, Professor Robbins's two very interesting chapters on Ireland and Scotland show how much stronger and how much more radical the Commonwealth tradition was there than in England. Ireland was a ruthlessly exploited colony, the vast majority of whose population was excluded from political life and lived on the verge of destitution; and this is reflected in the writings of men like Swift and Berkeley. They were in no sense republicans or even radicals; but the radical Henry Yorke at the end of the 18th century declared that his republicanism had been reinformed by reaidng Swift, and Thomas Spence drew on Swift and Berkeley in his *Pig's Meat, or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude* in the 1790's. In Scotland, Lowland prosperity contrasted sharply with the poverty and backwardness of the Highlands, the only area besides Ireland from which there was any mass support for the Stuart cause after 1688. Hence the astonishing radicalness of the Scottish sociologists of the later 18th century, to which Professor Robbins propertly draws attention.

Professor Robbins rightly emphasizes the democratic elements in Adam Smith's thought. "What deeply stirred Smith's sympathy was the condition of the lower ranks of society. . . . His most striking passages were devoted to sympathetic consideration of the workers. An examination of the liberties of Greece and Rome led him . . . to the statement that such liberty was founded on slavery." She quotes extensively from Robert Wallace, who went far beyond the aristocratic republican tradition in wanting to abolish "not only poverty but the fear of it," and seeing that this involved the abolition of private property. Wallace advocated a world state on federal lines.

Finally, Professor Robbins's chapter on "The Contribution of Nonconformity" shows how—

"Once upon a time, *when popular fiction admitted both Good Guys and Bad Guys, evil was a palpable force, waiting beyond the cottonwood trees. Now we have a more permissive universe, peopled only by Good Guys, a few of whom do not see the light until the closing chapters. There can be no real snakes in Eden any more; there must be instead, to account for unpleasantness and violence, a Problem. A Problem can be exorcised, as sin cannot be, by A Liberal Education (words and music by Mark Van Doren).*"

From the current issue of NATIONAL REVIEW. Write to Dept. Y-6, 150 E. 35 St., New York 16, N. Y., for free copy.

Looking for a PUBLISHER?

Your book can be published, promoted, distributed by successful, reliable company noted for prompt, personal service. All subjects. Free Editorial Report. Inquiries also invited from businesses, organizations, churches, etc. Send for Free Booklet. Vantage Press, Dept. CM, 120 W. 31, New York 1.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

though nonconformists in general took a radical Whig standpoint in politics, and some individuals are important in her story—nevertheless organized dissent lost its political driving force with the triumph of Unitarianism, which goes with abandonment of hopes of seeing Christ's kingdom come on earth. This exactly parallels the way in which the revolutionary aspects of Harrington's theories were forgotten (his strong sense of the power of men to control economic forces), so that his influence worked in favor of a passive economic determinism.

The aristocratic republicans failed in 1647–59, and again in 1678–89, because they broke with the democrats and so remained an isolated group. The same lack of any significant social basis continued to make the thought of the men and women Professor Robbins studies entirely academic. In a giveaway sentence she tells us that in one sense 1688 "might be said to end a political development. In another, by its success and by a general acceptance of its Whiggist rationalization, it made respectable eventually a large body of republican or Commonwealth writers." They became respectable because they were no longer dangerous.

It is easy to see today that the crucial question is one which the 18th-century Commonwealthmen never asked—who are "the people," on whose behalf they claimed to speak? In this, they were true to their 17th-century ancestors. "By 'people' most 17th-century republicans had meant people of some state and consequence in the community. Cobblers, tinkers, or fishermen were not people but scum to Whigs like James Tyrrell—who used the term—to Locke, Withers, and Trenchard." Most of Professor Robbins's Commonwealthmen had no use for "the rabble."

It is hardly surprising that the Commonwealthmen played no great part in the radical revival. London mobs pushed on a doubtful Wilkes; Corresponding Societies shocked the Society for Constitutional Information. The plebeians had reappeared. The aristocratic Commonwealthmen handed on half a torch, and that was better than no torch at all. Professor Robbins has written half the book that her subject calls for.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Maurice Cohen, a new contributor, teaches philosophy at the Juilliard School in New York and is now writing a book on Plato.

Milton Hindus, professor of literature at Brandeis University, received the 1959 Walt Whitman Award of the Poetry Society of America.

David Ray, another newcomer here, is the former editor of the *Chicago Review*.

Rose Guildenstern is the pseudonym adopted by an experienced critic of the Israeli scene.

Reuel Denney, a co-author of *The Lonely Crowd*, is a visiting professor this year at the Humanities Center of Wesleyan University.

Ben B. Seligman, a labor economist, reviewed a biography of Keynes here in December 1955.

Christopher Hill, the Oxford historian, is a specialist on the Puritan Revolution and its sequels. This is his first review for Commentary.

a mark of respect

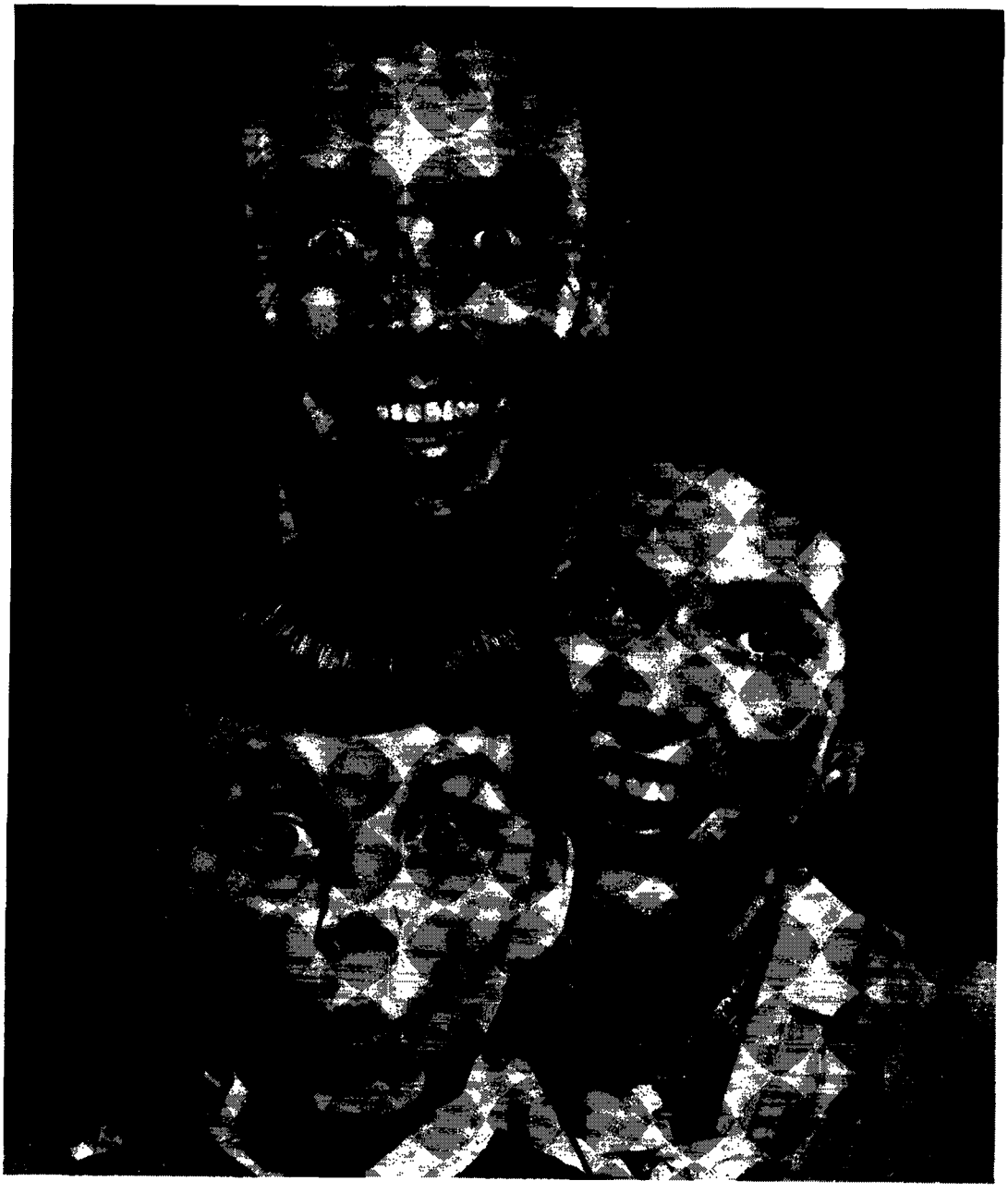
Riverside
MEMORIAL CHAPEL, INC.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Charles Rosenthal
Carl Grossberg
Edward Rosenthal
Maxwell W. Passerman
Morton Rosenthal
Lee J. Filer
Lawrence Grossberg

NEW YORK • BROOKLYN • BRONX • WESTCHESTER • LONG ISLAND • MIAMI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Who's excited?

Everybody– about the trim new compact cars...sleek new standard models...exciting new sports car imports. Amoco salutes them *all*, and invites their new owners to fill-up at the Amoco sign of quality with Amoco-Gas, the *only one of its kind!* Clear, white, with clean-burning freedom from harmful metallic deposits. Or if your car uses regular, there's Amoco's American Gas, precision-refined to be the *best* of the "regulars." Whatever your car's fuel requirements, you'll find it at the Amoco sign of greater values, *quality* values.

AMOCO

American Oil Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHALLENGE!

CAN WE MEET THE NEW COMPETITION?

"In the forty years that have elapsed since its Revolution, Russia has devoted a far larger portion of its gross national product to education than have we. As a result of this intense commitment to education on the part of the Soviets, we as a nation are presented for the first time with a challenge to our leadership in all of the values that we cherish.

"If we rightly interpret the significance of this event, our first reaction of dismay and consternation will herald a rededication of ourselves to the best that we have learned from our first century of educational effort. We have a longer and a stronger tradition, greater resources in depth and diversity, a freedom of enterprise, and a talent for innovation which can all combine to more than redress the present balance and carry us to new heights of educational accomplishment if we display the requisite wisdom and determination."

GAYLORD P. HARNWELL
President, University of Pennsylvania

WE CAN AND MUST MATCH THEIR ZEAL—because our strength as a nation will depend on how we treasure and build our educational assets. Yet the hard facts are these:

1. Low salaries are not only driving gifted college teachers into other fields but are steadily reducing the number of qualified people who choose college teaching as a career.

2. Many college classrooms are already overcrowded yet in less than ten years entrance applications will double in number.

You can help in this crisis, one of the gravest in our history. Support the college or university of your choice—now!

For further details of what this can mean to you and your children write:
HIGHER EDUCATION, Box 36—Times Square Station, N. Y. 36, N. Y.

ADVERTISING COUNCIL · PUBLIC SERVICE ·

HIGHER EDUCATION · KEEP IT BRIGHT

Sponsored as a public service in behalf of
The Council for Financial Aid to Education

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED